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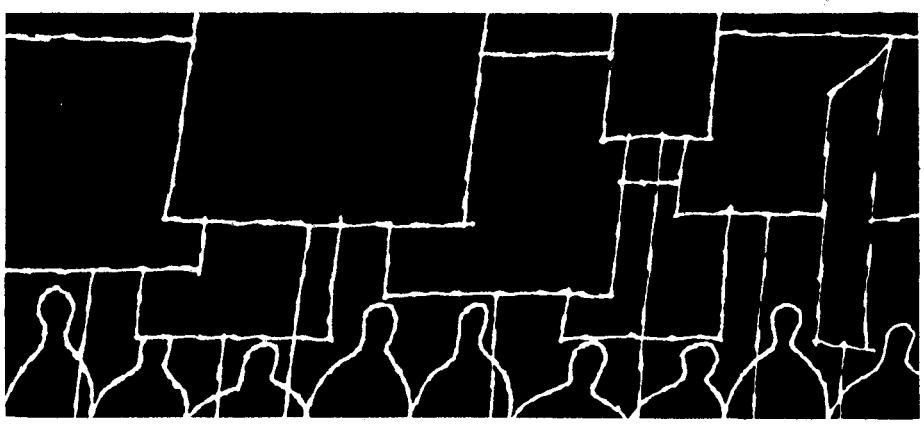
# commonweal



## SPAIN AND VIETNAM

*Wilson C. McWilliams & Dennis Hale*

## THE GREELEY-ROSSI REPORT

*Robert D. Cross*

## A THEATER OF MYSTERY

*Paulette Martin*

## HOW TO BE NICE

*Alan Pryce-Jones*

## CCD--R.I.P.?

*Joseph O'Donoghue*

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# NEWS AND VIEWS

*Keeping up with the cost of living:* Queen Juliana of the Netherlands, one of the richest people in the world in her own right, is getting a raise in income from the Dutch government. Instead of $700,000 a year, she will now get $1,440,000 in allowances from public funds. In voting an increase, the coalition government (Catholics, Socialists, Anti-Revolutionaries) explained that the Queen needs more than a million dollars each year to pay salaries for her staff.

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The Catholic Council on Civil Liberties, after seven rocky years, is going out of existence. Explanation: no money.

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*National Review* exults at the birth of *Triumph* (nee *Future*), Brent Bozell's "conservative Catholic" magazine: "Such a magazine for Catholics is desperately needed because the most prominent Catholic journals (e.g., *America, Commonweal*) are tediously uniform in their attachment to the idols of Liberalism in politics and, respecting their own religion, obsessed with their interpretation of Vatican II as a renunciation of Catholic practice, tradition, and authority—for what amounts to the desacralization of Christendom."

•

"There is certainly no doubt that apartheid is firmly rooted in the Church (in South Africa); that most white Christians including a large number of the clergy support government policy, a few of them openly, the majority tacitly by their indifference, selfishness and greed. There is no doubt also that many of them would leave the churches if any attempt were made to re-educate them or to integrate parish activities; but it seems to me we must be prepared to accept this and even to escort them cheerfully from the premises since they have obviously closed their ears to the message of the Gospel. As it is, thousands of Africans are turning away from the faith in disgust. Already the Church is in danger of losing a whole generation of young Africans."

—Father Malcolm Magee, O.P., after leaving South Africa.

•

By our count, fifteen American Catholic bishops have taken a clear-cut stand on the Vietnam war—and all 15 are for it. They include Cardinal Cushing ("There are moments in human history when evil men and evil ways can only be met with force"), Cardinal Spellman ("My country right or wrong"), Archbishop Hallinan of Atlanta and Cardinal Shehan of Baltimore. Cardinal Shehan had allowed his name to be signed to a non-committal plea for earnest consideration of moral issues in Vietnam. After it drew heavy negative reaction from pro-war elements in Baltimore, the Cardinal ordered his diocesan paper not to print anything more about Vietnam dissent, and then issued his own declaration of support for the war.

•

Bishop Gioacchino Pedicini, 83, of Avellino (near Naples) has rocked his diocesan priests by sending them a letter charging that the only thing many of them care about is making money. He castigated many priests for "a tendency to become bourgeois," "a slack spiritual life," and a lack of zeal for souls. While there is much talk of the poverty of the Church, he added, many priests give the impression that "the end teaching of their faith is their basic stipend and their various special fees."

•

Donald Nicholl, writing in the *Clergy Review* (England), claims to have discovered proof that old devil Americanism still lurks over here in the colonies: "Soon after expressing some doubts about Americanism I came across the following Credo in *Commonweal* (Feb. 11th): 'most of the traditional values of Christian theology are merely means to achieve those more positive values which the modern American cherishes.' " Since we didn't remember such a Credo, we looked it up and discovered it was part of a long sentence included in a letter to the editor. Credos should be made of sterner stuff. So should a magazine's Americanism.

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The striking farm-workers of Delano, writes the Rev. Wayne Chris Hartmire, are facing their most acute financial crisis: "The election drive is very expensive and many bills cannot be paid. The farm workers have only one certain source of support: those of you who have stood with them from the beginning." A special need: $6000 to buy some new clothes and shoes for children of strikers returning to school this fall ($15 per child, 400 children). Donations should be sent to the National Farm Workers Association, P.O. Box 130, Delano, California 93215.

•

Please don't feed the clerics (notice in the parish bulletin of St. Dominic's in Brick Town, N.J.): "*To Our Well-Meaning Parishioners:* We have lived with a situation that has grown like cancer for the past three years. We hoped that it would correct itself but it has grown to almost scandalous proportions. Some Families insist on entertaining Priests who work for St. Dominic's. We feel that they mean well but their good intentions are blinded to many problems. We provide the Priests in the Rectory with food and refreshments and entertainment and we wish it to *remain* this way. There will be *no* social visits in St. Dominic's Parish by Priests who work in St. Dominic's. *Please* do *not* invite them to your homes for dinners—snacks—social visits, etc. There are exceptions of course, such as wedding receptions—25th or 50th wedding anniversaries, sick calls—official visits—etc. Always make an effort to respect a Priest. Help him to uphold his dignity—but never hurt or lower a Priest and be of no harm to the Church or Parishioners."

JOHN LEO



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# CORRESPONDENCE

### *South Africa*

Pittsburgh, Pa.

*To the Editors*: I was very impressed by your strong and forthright editorial [July 1] on South Africa which condemned *de facto* American support of *apartheid*. I hope that it will do something to arouse the conscience of this nation from its apathy concerning a problem which is not really as far away in American involvement as was Vietnam in 1954. . . .

There are scores of American firms that are deeply involved in the South African economy, both in the sense of producing in that country and exporting to it and in the sense of receiving imports of that country. We have in our possession, therefore, a tremendous instrument of persuasion which, since it is obviously not being used, really is becoming a boomerang for us in that because of our inaction we are rapidly losing the confidence of the rest of the African nations. . . .

I am not urging that we "interfere in the internal affairs of other countries." What I am, however, urging is two things:

One, that as much as is possible, Americans disengage themselves from the financial support of *apartheid*. If this is carried out in any substantial measure, the results, of course, would be far beyond whatever the amount of money that was withdrawn or withheld. The psychological effect on businessmen around the world would be to weaken the confidence in the stability of the South African regime. The South African authorities are fully aware of this and, many believe, would go to all sorts of lengths to re-establish this confidence —perhaps even to the length of scaling down the walls of *apartheid*, at least somewhat. . . .

The second thing I wish to urge is that as many conscientious Americans as possible write their senators and congressman and insist that the hearings that have been conducted on American

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# NEW FOOD POLICY

Certain American farmers who testified at committee hearings might be excused for fearing that the Department of Agriculture's two increases of wheat-acreage allotments would lead to new burdensome surpluses; some of these men undoubtedly are veterans of a thirty-years war over the problem. What is hard to explain is the failure of the Administration, with its fund of information on world trends and conditions, to shift from a policy of restriction to one of planned expansion before last May. The best our wheat farmers can do now is bring in a larger crop by next spring, while other American producers of vital foodstuffs who wish to supply more will not be able to come through until even later. The recent droughts and emergency demands from India and Morocco do not absolve those responsible for not redirecting American farm policy many months ago, when surpluses of grain and dairy products were constantly dwindling and the signals of present and impending world food shortages under population pressures became unmistakable.

Belated permission to expand our food production is one of the government's answers in this crisis, which is deepening for many peoples. Another is notification to other governments that the United States will have to curtail its wheat shipments abroad by 25 percent during the year ahead. A third is the new Food for Peace bill, which requires only the ironing out of a few discrepancies by House and Senate conferees to serve as the basis for American policy during the next two years. Among other things, this cuts down the funds appropriated for disposing of our farm surpluses and calls for more payments in dollars, rather than in the soft currencies often constructively applied to local economic development. Such harder terms do not mean that the need of other peoples is any less, or that the importing countries now have ruinous inflation in better check or dispose of improved foreign exchange; the reverse is usually true. Primarily it reflects Washington's anxiety over payment balances, in part because of the Vietnam war, and it also means that American agriculture no longer has to worry about



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disposing of food surpluses that depress commodity prices.

There *is* logic in the high priority which the new program designates for those countries which are increasing their own production of food and tackling their population problem. For it is only when a much larger sector of the world is self-sustaining in food that there is any hope of a viable solution. That underlines the importance of grass-roots community projects, such as those sponsored here and there by missionaries, the Peace Corps and other agencies, if they can be many times multiplied —and of such current large-scale projects as the twelve-million-dollar fertilizer plant for Senegal financed by the World Bank to increase production in West Africa; the top-priority farm program in India's current 5-year plan; and the project for Southeast Asia being set up on Formosa by the Agency for International Development in order to double the whole area's fruit and vegetable production in the next 5 years.

Larger food shipments on easy terms are, and will for some time continue to be, an immediate need, but they obviously comprise no lasting solution. Concurrently there has to be a vast expansion of capital and technicians from the industrialized nations if a widespread catastrophe is to be avoided.

## THE U.S. AND FRANCE

Paris

Should the U.S. and France consider their foreign policies in terms of a "special relationship"? The question seems almost ridiculous at the moment. Monsieur Emmanuel d'Astier, the French TV news commentator whose remarks on Vietnam recently brought forth an official complaint from Washington, has been comparing the British-American "special relationship" to a satellite system. In doing so, he reflects a good deal of French opinion.

Nonetheless, the question is provocative. Could there be an analogue to the coordinated parallelism of British and American foreign policies in an intended (and willing) divergence of French and American policies? In the simplest sense, might not Washington base its attitude toward Paris on an agreement to disagree? Not merely as the condition of a *modus vivendi,* however—that would miss the point entirely. Instead such a Washington-Paris understanding would base itself on the recognition that, at the present moment of world history, disagreement will be more productive than formal unity.

These, I grant, are Delphic formulae. They can be clarified by a quick (and oversimplified) glance at two current views of French-U.S. relations. Standard State Department resembles a longstanding Catholic view of the Reformation: de Gaulle may have had some just grievances, but he should have resolved them within the fold of NATO. Instead, he revolted, injuring Western unity. Now, the damage must be contained as well as possible.

A school of "American Gaullists" puts forth an opposing view. International Communism is splintered. The East-West conflict in Europe is stalemated. A "third world" of ex-colonial nations has emerged. France alone, according to these critics, has recognized fully the implications of these events. The U.S. should follow de Gaulle's lead—i.e., dismantle the Atlantic Alliance; effect a rapprochement with Russia and Eastern Europe over Germany's head; and cease meddling in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Are these conclusions more "gaullist" than de Gaulle himself? Do they conveniently ignore certain other aspects of Paris's foreign policy—France's distrust of the UN, its absence from the Geneva disarmament talks, the restrictive effect of its conservative monetary policy on international aid? No matter. The fact is that for many of these American Gaullists French foreign policy is less a reality in itself than an instrument for attacking Washington.

Given the unending slaughter in Vietnam and the tragic inability of America to recognize misery as a form of totalitarianism, one must grant these critics whatever weapons they choose to wield. Still, in at least one respect, their conception mirrors the State Department's. Where the one wishes France to fall in line behind the U.S., the other wishes the U.S. to fall in line behind France.

Were American foreign policy reoriented to meet many of the criticisms so justly levelled at it, there would nonetheless remain much the U.S. simply cannot do—and France can.

Americans, clearly aware of the financial cost of their post-war role, are less conscious of the other expenditures —of diplomatic flexibility and moral prestige, for example—which have been involved. For one thing, the U.S. simply cannot experiment freely. France, on the other hand, has been able to shift considerably in its relations with Germany over the past few years. It has made one initiative after another in seeking a formula for an independent Europe and a rapprochement with the East. The effort has been fruitful: new ties with Eastern Europe, further dissolution of the satellite bloc, new appraisals in Bonn and Washington of the realities of German reunification. Yet the whole process has naturally engendered a certain mistrust of France and, especially in West Germany, a touchy surveillance of every French move. Had the U.S. attempted these same maneuvers, the result might well have been chaos rather than readjustment.

For another thing, even if the U.S. should change its hypocritical attitude toward the developing nations, its past role alone, as the leading "capitalist" nation in the Cold War, will prevent it, for at least a generation, from effectively representing Western values in much of Africa and Asia. Ironically, but realistically, the ability of ex-colonialist France to fulfill this task is only outmatched



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by its sometimes self-serving eagerness to undertake it. Yet such a role also demands that France keep its distance from American foreign policy, whether reformed or not.

Again, no conceivable change in U.S. Far Eastern policy will do away with our commitments to Japan and India. No conceivable change in U.S. Middle Eastern policy will do away with our commitment to Israel. (Unless, of course, we are resigned to seeing these three nations with nuclear armaments.) France will continue to enjoy a maneuverability vis a vis China and the Arab world, an ease at keeping channels open and maintaining a Western presence, denied to the U.S.

In short, France can experiment, make contacts, keep options open. Granted, it can do these things only on the basis of the relative stability imposed by American (and Soviet) commitments. But it can also do these things only on condition that its relations with Washington be clearly characterized by independence, that is, by some apparent divergence.

There remains a serious difficulty: France's independent nuclear force. Should the Soviets continue to develop an anti-missile defense, sooner or later it will become clear that the deterrent capabilities of the *force de frappe* can have only one logical reference—Germany. The recognition of this fact, however, will only reinforce what has been inherent all along in the French argument against the reliability of America's deterrent: an independent French nuclear force implies an independent German nuclear force.

Can French nuclear policy be reversed? Francois Mitterand's FGDS (Federation de la Gauche democrate et socialiste), currently trying to organize an opposition to the government in this autumn's legislative elections, has pledged to do so. Should the FGDS ever take power and hold to its word, the results would be sweeping. The momentum of disarmament might again be regained. The process of nuclear proliferation would show itself reversible. And the claim that a nation must possess nuclear arms to be accounted self-determining in foreign affairs would have an opportunity to be disproved.

The odds against such a happy ending are great; nor could it come about within the time span usually considered in the planning of foreign policies. Yet why place obstacles in the way? The recent State Department complaint about the tenor of a French telecast did precisely this. It only served, as an editorialist in *Combat* wrote, "to further nourish French chauvinism," and to aid the Gaullists in the Fall. Other French papers speculated as to whether the unusual American venture into TV criticism was a calculated attempt to provoke an incident and would be followed by increasing U.S.-French tension on the occasion of President de Gaulle's visit to Cambodia.

Such tension only weakens the French opponents of the *force de frappe*. What Washington should realize—and perhaps it has—is that de Gaulle's journey to Cambodia represents all that is valuable in a new sort of "special relationship," based on divergence rather than subservience. It is his visit to Tahiti which represents the difficulty.

PETER STEINFELS

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**FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

# THE LURE OF INVASION

If I were to bet on the next big change in the Vietnam war I would bet that there will be an American amphibious invasion of North Vietnam—within a year, perhaps within six months, conceivably before the Congressional elections in November. Secretary Rusk's ambiguous statement in August about the possibility of the land war spreading to the North suggests an early date, but Mr. Rusk may also have been trailing his coat. The solid grounds for speculating on an invasion are much simpler. An invasion to seize the principal cities of the North is consistent with this Administration's policy commitments and style, and the stalemate which today exists in the South is likely to seem intolerable to Mr. Johnson.

I say an invasion to take Haiphong and Hanoi. Also possible is an attack on the southern coastal area north of the demilitarized zone, but that involves the costs of escalation without promising decisive gains. If such is the choice it will be the result of a hedged decision. But an attempt to take the capital and North Vietnam's principal port is another matter. It responds to the dilemma that Washington today faces.

For as the war stands today there is no end in sight. All summer we have heard a counterpoint of pessimistic statements issued in Saigon and optimistic denials issued in Washington. The result has only emphasized the remoteness of any solution. Washington denies that the Marine Corps expects the war to require five years and 750,000 U.S. troops. It discounts reports that the United States will have to take over pacification of the countryside from the Vietnamese Army. It denies that the air war has had only a marginal effect on North Vietnam's military and economic capabilities.

Moreover, there is a new awareness of the devastation the war is causing within the social structure of South Vietnam—in civilian deaths, but also in damage to what remains of a functioning economy and civil structure in the country. Vietnam's inflation, the consequent expropriation of the (anti-Communist) middle-class, the



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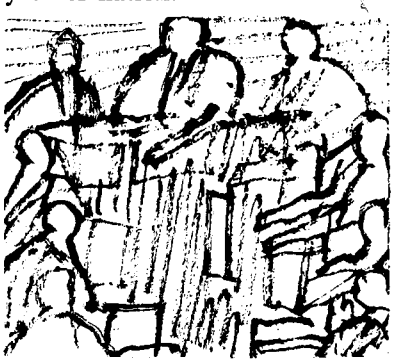
breakdown of social and health services (resulting, among other things, in the appearance of the plague), are developments that can hardly be remedied so long as the war goes on.

The experience of the Truman Administration must haunt Mr. Johnson. An inconclusive Asian war destroyed Mr. Truman's consensus and undermined his power to lead. By the time of the Eisenhower challenge in 1952 the Democrats were no longer able to go forward or go back, and the terms on which President Eisenhower settled the war would have been impossible for them. The same conditions are taking command of this Administration, and Mr. Johnson can hardly face with equanimity the Congressional elections this fall, to say nothing of a presidential campaign two years from now, while another inconclusive Asian war wears on—a war about which, unlike in 1952, the Democrats themselves are bitterly divided. Inchon, then, must be a second precedent from Korea which this Administration remembers. That brilliant victory ended the first Korean war, the war with the North Koreans, and only a blunder created the second war with China.

Is an "Inchon" plausible in Vietnam? It would come as no strategic surprise—assuming minimal prudence in Hanoi. But if it overcame Vietnamese defenses and could take a salient that included Hanoi and Haiphong there would, at best, be a possibility that the Communist government would collapse, and that elsewhere in Vietnam the will of the insurgents to continue the struggle would be undermined. There would also be two very bleak possibilities: that resistance would be continued in the countryside and the South Vietnamese situation simply recreated on a larger scale, and that China or the Soviet Union would intervene. And China's Hainan Island flanks the sea lanes to North Vietnam.

The military appreciation of any such American move must thus be qualified and cautious; but as against the risks there stands the lure of decisive action. I have suggested before that there is a kind of symbiotic relationship between the doctrines of Asian Communism and our own style of political-military war. They insist that we are driven to ever-enlarged aggressions against "the people," but that our material power can be defeated after it has been drawn deeply into the popular struggle in the countryside where the political and moral advantage is with the rebels. We, in turn, are committed to impersonal and technological forms of war, and we assume that as our political values are decent ones, they also are universal ones. If we were to take Hanoi, it would be in the belief that the people, released from the control of their government, would repudiate it. My own conviction is that in such a situation the dominating factors would not be political or economic: rather, that they would be race, xenophobia, still another convulsive repudiation of foreigners by a society which has been disrupted by foreigners for more than a century. The Vietnamese would resist not because Communism is so powerful in its appeal but because in modern Vietnam the alternatives have been crushed, and there remains only the choice between Vietnam and foreigner.

If that is the truth about what the war has become for the Vietnamese, another truth about what the war has become is this: there has been a steadily enlarged displacement onto Vietnam of interests, ambitions, and values that have nothing essential to do with that war. The interests of the United States in Vietnam today involve the prestige of a great power, a commitment to fulfill an accumulation of past commitments lightly made and blindly reiterated, and fear for the moral consequences of failure. On the Russian side—and it is the prospect of Russian intervention which is more disturbing than that of Chinese—there has been a steady discrediting of their reliability as allies, their willingness to defend friends, their *seriousness* as a world power. There is a sense in which the Soviets have suffered more from this war than any other nation.



It is hard to see that this process of widening the scale, consequences, and dangers of the war can be arrested. The United States has been driven to make the war bigger because we have been unable to come to grips with the elusive factors of the struggle within South Vietnam. Our dream has been that somewhere outside the forest and delta of the South, somewhere outside the tormented politics of Saigon, there exists a lever of decision. And this dream, the policy of escalating and internationalizing the war, has already claimed too many lives for it to be easily abandoned—our investment is profound, and reversal is no longer a matter of conceding error and cutting losses.

The Johnson Administration can hardly be expected to reverse itself. Its leaders are committed by the American casualty total far more than by policy convictions; the policy rationale the Administration has defended in the past now is indispensable to justify what already has been done.

As for the future—the future, of course, is synonymous with choice. We do not have to enlarge the war. But if we are without any clear hope of resolving our crisis within the present arena of war, the choice may seem to reduce itself to action as against inaction. In that case, I think, the decision is inevitable. WILLIAM PFAFF



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## THE SCOPE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

# CCD--R.I.P.?

The national convention of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine will impress many of its participants when it is held in Pittsburgh, September 14-17. Somber, authoritative pronouncements will be made regarding the importance of the parish organization currently attempting to provide religious training for Catholic children attending public schools. The presence of hundreds of laity engaged in religious instruction programs throughout the nation will tend to produce an atmosphere of new hope for a program frequently referred to in its own publications as in a state of crisis.

But the convention will not impress all the participants. Somber, authoritative pronouncements on the importance of CCD programs were made at previous conventions at Buffalo in 1956 and at Dallas in 1961 without noticeably raising the sagging level of CCD achievement. The parish experience of many delegates will have convinced them that the enthusiasm of mass gatherings of the committed does not substantially alter the apathy and the obstacles encountered locally.

How many participants will be unimpressed? At the earlier national assemblies the misgivings of those personally aware of the discrepancy between CCD pronouncement and CCD reality could not be substantiated by evidence. In Pittsburgh the documentation of massive failure will no longer be unavailable. A 1964 national survey, in which 40 percent of U.S. dioceses took part, revealed that only 5 percent of available religious education resources were being alloted to the 50 percent of all Catholic students outside the Catholic school system. A nationwide study recently completed by the national CCD office itemized a host of problems which had crippled parish CCD units: "defective organization in the parish; poor selection and training of teachers; unsatisfactory coordination of all the details that make for efficient religious formation of adolescents; lack of direction and moral support from the pastor and/or parish moderator; little or no financial support." Father Joseph Collins, S.S., National Director of the CCD and author of the study, found little evidence of lay direction in a supposedly laity-administered organization: "Although the CCD is an authentic lay organization, the voice and directive capacity of the laity is comparatively non-existent."

The study of Catholic education conducted by Father Andrew M. Greeley and Peter H. Rossi under a grant from the Carnegie Foundation offers additional evidence on the actual status of CCD programs in the U.S.: "There may well be CCD programs in the country that are elaborate and very effective, but if so, they are apparently not extensive enough to show up on a national sample."

Supported by this type of evidence the rank and file of CCD personnel may now begin to question the advisability of continuing the program in its current form of organization. What is the value of indefinitely perpetuating a program of amateur, non-salaried religion teachers when there is mounting evidence that such programs are either failing or non-existent? And why should parish CCD units remain under the personal direction of pastors when diocesan supervision (as in the case of parochial schools) is available as a means of insuring adequate financing and minimum standards?

Up to now CCD efforts in parishes have been expected to follow the guidelines proposed in a small manual produced by the National CCD Center, the unifying agency established by the American hierarchy in 1935. The manual offers an elaborate structure for every phase of religious formation within the parish, including pre-school children, elementary and high school students attending public schools, adult discussion clubs, etc. It expects each parish to be able to acquire a non-salaried staff of religion instructors assisted by volunteer clerical workers under the supervision of a parish board. Throughout the manual there is an assumption that the parish CCD will succeed wherever its directives are carefully followed. "Its [the manual's] growth, indicated by the ten editions and even more numerous reprintings, reflects the time-tested and hard-won development of the CCD in our country for the past 25 years . . . the *Manual* was and still is the 'Bible' of the Confraternity. The new edition of the *Manual* makes no substantial change in the familiar pattern of CCD organization."

The doctrinaire optimism of the manual exercises considerable influence on the overall planning of CCD programs. Like the manual the convention program in Pittsburgh presumes that the traditional method of operation should be retained. For example, convention workshops are scheduled to offer guidance to laity occupying executive positions on parish boards—as if there had been no study by the national director indicating the comparative non-existence of such boards and the unlikeliness of their future appearance on a sizable scale. The customary method of training volunteer CCD teachers and non-salaried administrative assistants will be discussed apart from any testing of the assumption that non-salaried



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teachers and staff are adequate in a modern program of religious instruction. Nowhere in the program is there any provision for the re-evaluation of the entire program which would seem to be demanded by the evidence now available regarding its ineffectiveness.

In these circumstances it would seem that the clergy and laity present at Pittsburgh have a singular opportunity to provide the CCD with what it has needed for some time, viz, the voice of organized dissent proposing viable alternatives to the traditional structure. A confrontation between the theory of CCD and its actual practice cannot be delayed much longer. A national convention would seem to offer the ideal opportunity to review the past accomplishments of the program in order to determine whether there is any justification for its continuation in its inherited format.

### *A Stop-gap*

At its American inception in 1935 the CCD was not intended to continue indefinitely. According to its manual, ". . . the organization was a stopgap, a holding operation awaiting completion of the Catholic school system." As a temporary expedient the CCD program of providing religious instruction for public school students received whatever resources were left after the primary commitment to the schools had been met. The rapid expansion of the school system requiring maximum energy and investment led to the material impoverishment of the CCD. A theoretical deficiency occurred when the CCD program became committed to the well-intentioned but non-professional management of pastor and laity, while religious instruction within the Catholic school system gradually acquired an improved status through centralized diocesan direction and supervision. CCD parish programs tended to remain autonomous units separated from outside-the-parish supervision and dependent on the initiative and competence available within the geographical confines of the parish.

The diocesan directors of CCD programs who in a 1964 survey strenuously objected to the 5 percent allotment of religious training resources to the approximately one-half of all Catholic children who are attending public schools were apparently visualizing a separate but equal status for their program. This viewpoint is the understandable result of participation in a program which has traditionally developed and relied upon resources independent of those available to Catholic school children. But is this division of resources within the Catholic community desirable? And can a program relying on a non-professional, non-salaried staff of instructors and clerical help ever achieve equality with a program providing professional, salaried personnel in the same capacity?

A possible alternative to the current division of resources would be to fuse all available religious formation resources into a single department in each diocese which would be responsible for religious instruction both inside and outside the Catholic school system. A centrally accredited, salaried staff of religion instructors, both religious and lay, would become the accepted norm for all children.

The most illusive dream of an adequate CCD high school of religion in every parish would be terminated by accepting regional institutes (existing buildings could be utilized) combining financial resources from many parishes in a manner similar to regional high schools. The most talented instructors now teaching in CCD programs and the best religion teachers in the Catholic school system would be utilized in evening sessions at central locations with transportation provided for various parishes on various nights. An adequate salary system for all staff members, a system of professional review of operation and the centralizing of resources (e.g., films, libraries, visual aids, guest speakers, etc.), now fragmented, could be expected to raise the overall level of achievement and student interest.

Under this proposal the parish CCD elementary school would utilize the same personnel and resources as the parochial school system. This would require a considerable realignment of function within the school system to permit the religion instructor, religious and lay, to become a specialist reserved for a dual commitment to children of the parish whether enrolled in public or Catholic schools.

The catechetical program in every parish would be required to meet standards determined by a diocesan department of religious formation and would be subject to frequent review by a board of supervisors. The overall direction of the catechetical program in each parish would be entrusted to an accredited professional in the field of religious education.

The above proposal is one of many alternatives to the current pattern which would undoubtedly be forthcoming if an atmosphere of re-evaluation of CCD can be established. Perhaps the "time-tested and hard-won development of CCD" into an elaborate structure of volunteer teachers, helpers, "fishers," etc., offers the best hope for the future despite its current record of non-adoption. But alternatives need to be considered and tested in a determined area to permit comparison with the existing pattern. Without the humility to objectively examine past efforts and the vision to propose new solutions the recognized failures of the past may be indefinitely perpetuated.

The question of the continued existence of the C.C.D. program is momentous in its implications. Not to ask the basic questions at Pittsburgh is in effect to agree to continue the present organization without critical analysis.

JOSEPH O'DONOGHUE

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# SPAIN AND VIETNAM

*Comparing Two Civil Wars*

**WILSON C. MCWILLIAMS & DENNIS HALE**

A comparison of the war in Vietnam and the war in Spain, which began just thirty years ago this past summer, is almost inevitable. Both belong to the category of internationalized civil wars, conflicts which carry the normal logic of civil war—atrocity, counter-atrocity, and terror—to a passionate and well-rationalized extreme. They come to constitute a subgroup in the expanding taxonomy of modern warfare: "limited total war."

To classify, however, is to abstract, and to abstract is to overlook differences; and the differences between the wars are as striking as their similarities. At the simplest level, the Left wanted the war in Spain fought to a victorious conclusion: no negotiation, neutralization, or compromise. Moreover, the Left warned the West that Spain was a prelude to a Second World War, and that men of good will ought to come off of the sidelines and choose sides. (Alvarez del Vayo's book is entitled *La Guerra Empezó en España*). The Right, on the other hand, wanted the war kept isolated and limited.

Fundamentally, the Western Left hoped that its governments (at least France and the United States) would intervene. That it appealed to "international law" against the appeasers' "non-intervention" was a freak, the product of the same monumental Spanish accident that resulted in the forces of the Left Revolution being called "loyalists." The Left appealed to the rights of sovereign states not because it respected those rights, but because such an appeal was convenient and respectable; moreover, it would help "our" side.

In fact, the great wisdom of the Left's view of Spain was that it analyzed the war in terms of that very "globalist" theory which the Administration is denounced for applying to Vietnam. No evasions were tolerated, no "real facts" like the unimportance of Spain in world politics or the fact that Franco was not really a fascist and might be "neutralized" were allowed to intrude. These same "facts" have become stock-in-trade in much of the left-liberal arguments regarding Vietnam. There is little doubt that the present American government would intervene in Spain: there remains only the suspicion that it would intervene on the wrong side. The government applies the logic of Togliatti. The Left speaks with the unwonted tongue of Cordell Hull.

Now, all this is easily explained as the result of ideological rationalization. One picks a side and then invents arguments to support it. Yet the striking fact is that, a few sectarians aside, the N.L.F. is not the "side" of the Western Left. It receives sympathy but not allegiance. In no Western country are international brigades forming, save for the rumor of Frenchmen eager to help the U.S. avenge Dien Bien Phu. The enemy in Vietnam is not fascism, but war itself. Or, at least, *this* war.

The protestors, consequently, speak a language which Hanoi and the N.L.F. would not understand. For the N.L.F. pacifism and non-violence may be pleasant goals, but are pointless as tactics. Something is not only worth dying for, it is also worth killing for, even killing other Vietnamese.

But the comparative detachment of the Western Left is understandable, and not only in terms of a changed attitude toward war wrought by World War II and the Bomb. Spain involved the Left in part because it was involved *with* them, with their own distinct conflicts, hopes, and habits of thought. Spain herself was a symbol, associated

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with the Armada, the Inquisition, the novels of Charles Kingsley and the history of Motley. Every great institution in the West had a counterpart in Spain, and every historical conflict a living parallel, so that Spain's agony reduced all divisions to the simplicity of a single, continuous front line. On one side were ranged (or so it seemed) Protestantism, Progress, Proletarians, Freemasonry, Free Love, and Free Inquiry, and on the other, their enemies: Feudalism, Clericalism, Militarism, Fascism, and so on.

### *A Melodramatic War*

It was, moreover, a melodramatic war. Both sides had their "personalities": Franco, Moscardó, La Pasionaria, Negrin, and the intellectuals. In Vietnam, only Saigon has "personalities" (if one includes the Buddhist leaders), for Ho and Giap are nearly as removed as were Stalin and Leon Blum. Spain was a war of great cities whose art and history mattered, and in which fortresses like the Alcazar were monuments as often as not. Vietnam is a war of squalid villages. In Spain the "front" coiled with dramatic precision across Aragon and Old Castille and it was possible to watch the darkened, Nationalist territory grow daily in the morning papers. No one can tell who is "gaining" in Vietnam and the war is fought out in rice-paddy ambuscades and bombings which are likely to strike friends as well as foes and more likely to strike neutral and desperately indifferent peasants.

Bruce Catton writes of the last year of the American Civil War that glory had become "out of date"; in Vietnam glory has always been impossible. The war stumbles on, every soldier anonymous, every battle a skirmish and every skirmish indecisive. And paradoxically, when war loses its glory only the result matters. In war there was a "substitute for victory" when men could exult in their own courage, in their reputation for nobility, in the great battles which covered the courageously defeated with honor no less, and often more, than they did the victors.

Tom Lehrer's satire speaks truly of Spain: "Back in the War against Franco,/That's where we all belongs./ What if he won all the battles,/We had all the best songs. . . ." Now, it may be perverse to find romance in war, but violence unrelieved by passion and glory becomes utilitarian: every horror becomes calculable and every monstrosity conceivable as an instrument on the path to successful conclusion. No one will write battle songs for Vietnam.

Reduce it to a fact: Spain "made sense" to the Western Left, emotionally, militarily, and ideologically, and Vietnam does not. Call it the "new face of war," as Browne does, or the "old face" made clear, free of any confusing (and comforting) illusions or any diverting comprehensions except the fact of death: either will be close to the truth.

In one sense, it is easier to understand the conflict of factions in South Vietnam than to understand the N.L.F., Hanoi, and Peking. In a street battle in Hué it is easy to choose sides: the Left for the Buddhists, the Right for Marshall Ky. The guerrillas and their allies are a different story: too patriotic to be internationalists, too Marxian to be nationalists, too ruthless to be humanitarians, too racial in tone to be humanists, too rural and too backward to be modern and too aggressively modernizing to be traditional. Even to state the problem is to reduce the incomprehensible to the comprehensibility of abstractions or "inside-dope" (now, as always, a pseudo-empathy purveyed to outsiders). The monolithic facade that is the "people's revolution" in Vietnam is monolithic precisely because we are lost when we penetrate beyond the facade, because the conflicts within it do not correspond to the conflicts we know, the struggles we understand.

This, after all, was true of Spain as well, but the confusion was felt by the Right, not the Left. The division between liberal and Communist, syndicalist and centralist, the Right understood with a sad and pitying wisdom, astonished that Liberals abroad failed to learn the folly of collaborating with a new despotism. But it did *not* understand the apparent monolith of Nationalist Spain, though it tried. Winston Churchill sought to see conservatism in the Falange but did, finally, discern something new and alien. The American Right was much more ambivalent toward the Nationalists: free enterprise Protestantism, of course, but Catholic America as well. The new element was nazism, fascism rendered ruthless, puritanic, irreligious, scientific, and modern. Sensing that alien element, the Right, especially in America, could not quite identify with Nationalist Spain, and had recourse to the retreats of "non-intervention," isolation, detachment and denunciation of war. And that is the experience of the Left in Vietnam.

### *The Death of Old Conflicts*

The truth is that the old conflicts in the West—the struggles and the battles that the Western Left understood—were "settled" in Spain and World War II. They were settled, in part, because the Left was victorious and the Right defeated, left with only a desire to hold back the deluge. Two wars carried forth against the banners of the Right resulted in a world that carried the banners (at least) of the Left. The old conflicts died because the world of which they were a part—the "not entirely" world of the middle class and the skilled worker, which was still not entirely industrial, urban, corporate, technological, universal, or secular—finally perished in the war; a new world has taken its place.

This new world is very largely a creation of the Left. The war from which the Left emerged victorious settled certain questions such as: Who should rule? What procedures should a polity operate under so that individual freedom is guaranteed? *Should* individual freedom be



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guaranteed? What is the individual's relation to the State? How "modern" should a state be? The answers, when put together, added up to the mass industrial state, the model political system of the post-war world.

And yet the Left is not entirely comfortable in this world, as the "new left" is constantly pointing out. The anguish of the SDS member over the virtues of the "corporate state" is an echo of his father's unvoiced uneasiness about the world he helped construct. The uneasiness is a suggestion, stronger than a hint, that the direction of events since W. W. II is toward goals which the Western Left suspects, fears, or even hates. In Vietnam the Old and New Left alike confront a movement which, each for its own reasons, neither can embrace with any great enthusiasm. The ADA offers lukewarm support for Administration policy because it fears that a South Vietnam run by the Vietcong will look like Red China. SDS offers opposition because it suspects that a South Vietnam run by the State Department will look like the United States.

The anchor point of Spain and Vietnam is the Soviet Union, which gained much in respectability in the first and may be gaining in the second, by advocating intervention and a united front in Spain, and by defending non-intervention and settlement in Vietnam.

Yet that point of reference only emphasizes the truth: that Spain and Vietnam are wars which belong to two eras, not to two generations. The clock has speeded up and the lifetime of a man may be lived in two epochs or more. The old myths that were the West's live only as illusions that befuddle men's efforts at finding the way. If the Western Left ever sees more clearly, it will be by recapturing the radical spirit which can conceive that "the West" and "the Left" were only two of the many labyrinths men build in their fumbling quest for humanity.

# THE GREELEY-ROSSI REPORT

**ROBERT D. CROSS**

For 150 years American Catholics have devoted much time and money to the support of denominational schools. For that same length of time they have been debating with themselves and with non-Catholics whether such schools are justified. As a consequence, on a sizable number of issues there has accumulated a surfeit of reasonings and rodomontade: are Catholic schools absolutely necessary to the existence of Catholicism in a non-Catholic, increasingly secular America? Assuming that Catholic children are likely to grow up Catholic whether or not they receive Catholic schooling, does Catholic schooling make them more devout, more observant, more diligent in Catholic activities? Does Catholic schooling so segregate Catholic children that they become indifferent, or even hostile, to the well-being of other Americans? Do Catholic schools instill such otherworldly attitudes that graduates are inhibited from that striving, acquisitive behavior which has contributed so much to the triumph of American capitalism? Finally, are the parochial schools capable of constructive change? Can they respond to the imperatives of a new world-scene, and to an evolving sense of the Church's mission?

Like the rest of us, Peter Rossi and Father Andrew Greeley had heard such questions debated often enough to feel a need for a qualitative change in the discussion (*The Education of Catholic Americans*. Aldine.) One recourse for them would have been to have concluded that most of these questions were no longer the most trenchant or relevant ones to examine. They rightly point out that the whole weight of social science theory and of empirical investigations of similar problems has established a strong presumption that formal institutions of any kind will have only limited effects upon an individual's values and behavior. It is simply no longer plausible to believe that a few hours a day in school will drastically reshape a student's religiousness, or tend to segregate a graduate from other Americans if family, neighborhood, occupation, and social class are working against such segregation. Previous studies by Greeley, Peter and Alice Rossi, and Father Joseph Fichter demonstrated the unlikelihood that parochial schools indoctrinated their students with especially unworldly attitudes. And the fact that parochial schools are being established almost daily in suburban parishes composed of prospering, educated, Americanized Catholics is so familiar that it is hard to imagine anyone believing that contemporary parochial schools have appeal only to the "lowly."

But Greeley and Rossi are trained sociologists, prominent in the National Opinion Research Center, and they have chosen not to begin with new questions, but, instead, to seek reliable, statistical verification of the answers social scientists have been giving, *a priori*, to the old, nagging questions. Theirs is certainly a worthwhile task. Not

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only is it an advance to know just *how* little (or *how* large) a supposed effect is; the systematic correlation, and cross-correlation of a wide number of variables, carried out by analysts as scrupulous and relentless as Greeley and Rossi, are bound to suggest complexities of interpretation that are unlikely to emerge from reflection alone. No one can read their book without benefit.

The core of their research was a questionnaire administered to a carefully selected national sample of Catholics, aged 23 to 57; some Protestants were also interviewed for purposes of comparison and control; and a special sample of *Commonweal* readers was included to test the possibility that a "liberal elite" might differ radically in experience or attitude. There is every reason to believe that the questionnaire, its administration, and the statistical inferences drawn from its results conform to the criteria of reliability and significance which survey research has perfected. Readers, of course, may wish that the survey had been more detailed; that more than five questions could have been asked to establish an index of "doctrinal orthodoxy," for example, or more than two questions to fix an "anti-Semitism" index. (Still, the authors wanted to establish fifteen indexes, and could not count on unlimited time from their respondents.)

### *Catholics and Public Schools*

Less understandably, the questionnaire fails to probe deeply into the way Catholics perceived the local public school. Some have always attended public schools even when a parochial school was "available," and it would have been interesting to know how far the surge of support for parochial schools has been associated with a revulsion at the "common-ness" of the common school. It has also been suggested that the parochial school has been perceived as in part an "ethnic" institution, but this perspective was not scrutinized in the questionnaire. The authors, it must be noted, have prepared themselves for such criticism, not only by trying to stipulate what they are not investigating, but also by a disarming candor: "The question," they write, "is not whether the data are of high quality or only of moderate quality; the question is whether there are any other data at all."

In laying to rest—one hopes for good—the suppositions that parochial schooling engendered a separatist hostility towards non-Catholics and a debilitating indifference towards economic enterprise, the authors are led to interesting speculation on the far more intriguing point of why those with a great deal of parochial schooling seem to be on the whole more tolerant, more at ease in the world, than those with some parochial and some public schooling. One hypothesis they suggest is that a great deal of parochial schooling succeeds in "plugging" the student in to the liberal, rational teaching of the Church, as distinct from some of its folkways. Another, by no means mutually exclusive, interpretation is that children who have gone through school with children perceived as "their own kind" may emerge with a personality less subject to attacks of anomie or insecurity. Such an hypothesis provides corroboration for the belief that the most desirable acculturation preserves many "structural" expressions of pluralism. The more familiar social theory has, of course, assumed that "ethnic" neighborhoods, friendship patterns, and above all schools ought to be eliminated for the wellbeing of society and the individual alike.

The main thrust of the book, however, is summed up in two linked observations. First, "there is no evidence that Catholic schools have been necessary for the survival of American Catholicism." This proposition is now completely persuasive, given the steady growth of the Church in periods and places where parochial schools were weak or non-existent. Second, there is "a moderate but significant association . . . between Catholic education and adult religious behavior." The authors show that the degree of this association is far from a constant. It is stronger with Catholics of some ethnic origins than with others. It takes more religious schooling to have an effect on men than on women (though for both sexes there is a "multiplier" effect rather than simple additive benefits from extra parochial schooling). The social class of the respondent as well as of his parents, the size of his home town, the religiousness of his spouse—all have an impact. By far the most important variable is the religiousness of his parents. (In 1880, Bishop John Lancaster Spalding had declared that "even well-organized parochial schools will accomplish comparatively little with children who have no home training"; Greeley and Rossi state flatly that "Catholic school administrators" might well conclude that "in theory at least, there was not much point in admitting children who were not from very devout families.")

Improvement in religious behavior was measured on five indexes: a sacramental index (for example, how often did the respondent take Communion?); a Church-as-teacher index (does the Church have the right to teach that the United States should not recognize Red China? that some means of family limitation are immoral?); a doctrinal orthodoxy index an ethical orthodoxy index; and a religious knowledge index. Not very surprisingly, parochial schools (like all formal educational institutions) have had most effect in instilling knowledge, least in changing "values." In this latter realm the authors acknowledge the schools' success was prominent mostly in areas of "creed, code, and cult" distinguishing Catholics from "the others." Understandable as this may be in a Church historically on the defensive in the United States, such a pattern of success is not likely to impress those Catholics who would have the schools instill, above all else, those Christian precepts of love and justice thought preeminently appropriate for a universal Church in an age of *aggiornamento*.

Largely agreeing with such criticisms of the schools in



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the past, the authors are by no means unwilling to assay the future. In doing so, they are obliged not only to derive clues from sources less persuasive than their main questionnaire, but also to venture responses to rather different questions from those confronted in the heart of their study. Will Catholic parents continue to support parochial schools? To the authors this question is tantamount to asking whether Catholic parents will want formal religious education for their children, beyond that given in home and church. Contemporary polls suggest that they do now; and the rise in social status that can be predicted will have its usual consequence of a heightened demand for religious education. But will this be sought in the parochial schools? The authors think so, and point out that the "liberal elite" they sampled had no serious objection to the parochial schools, insisting only that the "quality" of the schools must be superior. The authors construe this to mean "religious quality." From a supplementary, not very rigorous, survey they made of *recent* parochial school graduates, they derive hope that higher religious quality is being attained, and that the graduates will continue to benefit when they have been away from school as long as the respondents in the main survey—who seemed to have benefited so little. In any case, the authors can visualize no alternative to the parochial school for religious education. Confraternity of Christian Doctrine efforts, so far at least, have been unimpressive, judged by the same indexes of religious behavior as were used to measure parochial school efforts.

But it is possible to believe that an increasing number of Catholic parents, wanting quality education that includes not only religious education, but a whole gamut of intellectual and social experiences, may continue to seek arenas for religious training other than the parochial school. (The very skimpiness of parochial school success recorded in this book is bound to encourage efforts, as the authors not completely happily point out.) Of course, parochial schools will not disappear; they may even multiply. Any system built up at such sacrifice, staffed by so many dedicated teachers, enjoined by so many priests and bishops, offering such a respectable alternative to the public schools along with such a satisfying mode of expressing one's religious loyalties through one's children, is bound to persist. But what Catholics will continue to seek other forms of education for their children? And what forms will these be? And what will these choices imply about the function of the parochial schools?

Such questions do not seem to me answerable from the kind of research conducted by Greeley and Rossi. To understand what the education of a religious group is or will be, it is necessary to plumb deeper into what the members of the group feel is involved in their whole cultural identity, and to examine more exhaustively the many institutions of education—formal and informal, public and private, existing, or potential—which are seen to foster or inhibit that sense of identity in one's children. Parochial schools were, by the showing of this book, part of the answer in the past, but the question remains open in what ways and to what extent they will prove the answer of the future.

*Manners in America*

# HOW TO BE NICE

**ALAN PRYCE-JONES**

The problem of what constitutes good manners puzzles and annoys me. Since I grew up I have had to study the matter pragmatically: learning one kind of manners at school in England, another on the Continent, a third in the army, and finally, in middle life, a whole new range of conduct in the United States. I've watched the polite at work in Japan, in Anatolia, in Morocco, in Central Africa. I've read about the theory behind it all in Sir Harold Nicolson's *Good Behavior*. And I remain, I repeat, puzzled and annoyed.

A new attempt has been made to illuminate American manners (*The Polite Americans*, by Gerald Carson, Morrow, $6.95), but it has not helped. The book is an amusing ragbag of facts about what the publisher calls "the reaching out of the American man and woman for self-improvement and a life of some grace." Mr. Carson is not much concerned with the high peaks, though the Mrs. Potter Palmers and the Mrs. Jack Gardners flicker briefly in and out. What concerns him is the broad central stream of American life since Colonial days: the awful strivings of everyday. To grow a beard or not to grow a beard, to select the right degree of eagerness if you are a young lady determined to sing after dinner, whether or not to wear a frock coat if you go to a tea for Mary Garden in Amarillo, Texas—such are the problems which

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vex his pages. He is not doggedly American, for he brings in (and spoils) an old British joke about the host whose servant dropped a boiled tongue and elicited the comment that it was only a *lapsus linguae*, and he quotes a still older joke about the French ducal family of Lévis-Mirepoix being cousins of the Virgin Mary, as though the claim were in some way cautionary and in some way connected with the United States.

But he does not—and perhaps no one can—clear up the difficult question of what constitutes good manners in the New World. He looks at the Puritans, Colonial Virginia, Presidential entertaining, middle-class gentility, such niceties as the distinction between smoking and chewing tobacco, such diverse institutions as the etiquette books and the garden clubs and the fraternal lodges. He is liberal with anecdotes. But at the end of it all he produces nothing more final than the story of a small boy who declared, "I have good manners. I say good night and good morning. I say hello and goodby, and when I see dead things lying around the house I bury them."

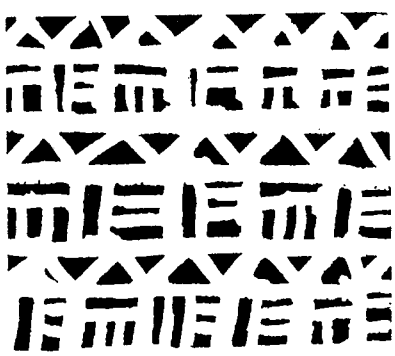
The first thought which springs to a British mind brought into touch with American manners is that they are a leftover from English provincial standards of about 1870. And none the worse for that, let me add. English mid-Victorian manners were a trifle bluff, but they were warm and generally accepted, until the twentieth century ushered in an age of decline when warmth turned to vulgarity and acceptance (understandably) to rebellion.

But in matters of manners it seems to the foreigner that Americans allow their inborn anxiety full rein. Someone in England classically defined a gentleman as one who is only rude on purpose, and it sometimes looks as if Americans are only rude by accident. At any given moment they have to remember so much: the rules, the possible consequences of action, the relative degrees of income and power of everybody in the room, the almost certain disaster of taking up any positive point of view at all. For is it not the purpose of American society simply to get by? Any opinion not universally commended may lead to trouble, any revelation of feeling may leave the company aghast.

Of course this is only true of "nice people." Just round the corner, in any large city, there will be small centers of the outspoken word. It is among those who set the standard of politeness that talk is so hedged and dim. For one thing, expectation is low. Very few people, I sometimes think, go to a dinner in the United States with any hope much above mere survival. That must be why the card-tables are set out so constantly, why the process of tanking up before dinner is so infinitely prolonged.

It is also true that the average "nice" American is kind, however. The last thing he wishes to do is to offend. He is therefore in a dilemma if he ventures at all outside his own circle. He wonders what the stranger is really thinking, what his own friends really think of the stranger. To the kind hosts in Illinois, New York is a probable Gomorrah; how much worse, then, Paris or London. The only way of dealing with such suspicion is to button up, to reveal nothing important, but rather to drown the situation in kindness. Have a drink. Have another. Take the car. Spend the weekend with my brother-in-law; you'll love him.

The total effect of this on the stranger is to give him a curious feeling of rootlessness. He begins to feel like one of those pallid mushrooms grown in the dark on artificial soil. The most charming courtesy reigns. Talk is safely occupied by half-volleying facts to the exclusion of opinions, gossip or intimacies. What never occurs is the sudden warmth which is a common experience in other countries, arising, perhaps, from a dangerous revelation, an off-beat view, an argument, even. Nobody charges in to quicken the tempo of talk by a flat contradiction, nobody interrupts except at enormous length.



I have come to think that American politeness conceals a lack of confidence. Confidence is not necessarily an endearing quality, but in social intercourse it is almost essential. Taxi-drivers are confident, so are salesmen in supermarkets, cleaning women and (less amenably) strangers in bars. That is why they play so large a part in the happy memories of visitors to the United States who, unless they are travelling for mercenary reasons, are likely to feel quite confident themselves.

For the United States are almost alone in possessing a social structure so complex that the inhabitants themselves are constantly made wary by a glance at their own social radar screen.

Picture a rich Long Island community, settled beside its beach club, its golf club and a convenient airstrip for the weekend Aero-Commanders. Picture in this pleasant place the situation of Mrs. Archbold, a rich and childless widow, whose green shutters open on to a pool of teapot temperature with the right section of the dunes beyond.

We are staying nearby, and for a day or two we meet Mrs. Archbold at every meal. She is dressed just so, she plays a good hand at bridge; when she asks us to dine we find that her Chinese Export dinner-service is as good as the one next door, and her daiquiris even colder. Everyone is charming to her.

And then the truth begins to seep through. Nobody



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cares about the three or four marriages, or about Mr. Archbold's rather dubious handling of certain accounts in his brokerage business. But isn't it true that she had her nose operated in the thirties, that anyway her mother, and possibly her father, was Jewish, that she has never achieved actually being allowed to help pay off the debts of the beach club? Wasn't it wise of her to install that lovely warm pool, someone murmurs.

It is here that polite Americans are hard for polite non-Americans to follow. Nobody will ever quite keep away from Mrs. Archbold, but she will be expected tacitly to know that she is there on sufferance, even if her attendance at the Episcopal Church is exemplary. But exactly who and what are the murmurers, a stranger may wonder: indistinguishable on the surface from Mrs. Archbold, but somehow elevated by a touch of Tuxedo Park, of Philadelphia, of Burlingame even though they may, to eye and ear, make the most dismal showing as figures of delight.

In one or two very reactionary European circles—that of the French Jockey Club or the German Hochadel—such situations may occur. But in a country which has no Adel, Hoch or otherwise, and no strict system of social precedence, it strikes the outsider as very absurd to import from Europe prejudices long forgotten in all but the most derelict societies, even if politeness does its best to conceal the fact.

Perhaps everyone with a social mission would be happier had George Washington not rejected "with abhorrence," as quoted by Mr. Carson, Colonel Lewis Nicola's proposal that he be crowned King George I.

I take comfort in various ways. One's own close friends, of course, are different, just as in any community they would be different from the exasperating majority: for is not each of us wiser and nicer and less prejudiced than our fellows? Then it is also true that Americans are more actively solicitous, especially to strangers, than any other people. And there is the fact that to possess infallibly good manners is a kind of presumption. It involves the bland assertion, *I know*.

Mr. Carson has some fun with American manners now outdated. He disapproves of the "enormous spittoon" at the door of the White House in the mid-nineteenth century, just as he disapproves of the extreme gentility which led Miss Beecher, about the same time, to recommend ladies of the house that they summon their staff about them and exhort each to the effect that "The duties committed to you by God . . . are indeed most solemn and important".

But there is no more reason to feel superior to these quirks than to, say, the Prussian or the Edwardian British propensity to practical jokes as a form of social accomplishment. Indeed, British manners after the turn of this century were so abominable that the memory of them still persists as a legend, all over the world. In vain do the British chatter in railway trains, lead the world in swingingness, turn out Beatles and Quants galore, and dash about the Continent in air-conditioned buses. They are regularly written off as morose, conventional, taciturn stay-at-homes, filled with Windsor soup (a disaster which vanished from all but the most degraded menus thirty years ago) and Imperial afflatus.

If the American wish to achieve "a life of some grace" is worth examining it is because before very long American grace will be the universal grace of the Western world. Some workable theory of what makes good manners must therefore be decided upon if social contacts are to continue bearable.

I believe that we should not watch the Establishments too closely: their manners have always been bad. Mr. Carson's nice middling people suffer from too great a preoccupation with the subject. Busy watching one another, they have no time to reflect on the purpose of it all.

But very simple people everywhere, who seldom bother their heads with niceties of conduct, make first-rate models. They are not impressed by conventions, their impulses are not cluttered by fashion or fear, they have a refreshing tendency to say what they think. I do not suggest a romantic attachment to the proletarian ideal, such as the poets of 1930 tried to foster. I do not suggest anything beyond the fact that "politeness" as a rule of conduct is not enough. The Kansas editor was right who said, "Whether or not it is polite to drink out of the same bucket after your pony depends entirely on the distance the water has to be drawn."

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J. V. GUERINOT

## *ON PETER'S TEARS*

in Pasolini's 'The Gospel According To St. Matthew'

Grief is like that. It comes suddenly,
Finding us unprepared. Peter has no place to go.
Abandoning Christ, he must weep publicly,
In the middle of a hot and ordinary street.

Anyone might wander by and watch him.
No one would choose a street like that for grief.
Railroad stations, restaurants are inappropriate
For ultimate discovery of our betraying selves.

We never have anything right to wear for grief;
We weep just as we are, owning no orange cloak
Like the Virgin's in the Veronese Crucifixion
in the Louvre
('The very color of grief,' said Berenson.)

Dressed anyhow, owning no time or place,
Shattering Jerusalem's geography,
Peter squats by a sunny wall and cries.
Puns on son and sun would be intolerable.



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# A THEATER OF MYSTERY

*From the absurd to the religious*

PAULETTE MARTIN

The theater has departed radically and irreversibly from its origins on the cathedral square. Here is a proposition we have grown accustomed to accepting without question. The mystery, miracle and morality plays are a thing of the past which can have only a historical interest. It seems that the Church and the theater, like the Church and the State, can only thrive separated. For the naive sense of miracles and mystery are foreign to a modern sensibility, and the medieval frame of reference which gave substance to the shadowy types of the moralities has long been lost. Any attempt to revive these genres, then, must seem irrelevant to a contemporary world that is thoroughly secularized. And yet if we look at the contemporary theater and the direction in which it is moving, I think we will need to revise some of these assumptions, or at least to take a good many new factors into account.

The new theater, for instance, has been characterized in a number of different ways: as a "theater of revolt" (Robert Brustein), or a "theater of protest and paradox" (George Wellworth), or in Martin Esslin's now consecrated term as the "theater of the Absurd." That it represents a complete break with naturalism or with conventional "bourgeois" theater everyone is agreed upon, and its beginnings are generally traced back to Alfred Jarry's "Ubu Roi." But it also is recognized as part of a larger movement which includes Brecht's "Epic" theater, Strindberg's "Expressionism," Pirandello's relativism, the "Existentialist" theater of Camus and Sartre, and such projectors of an inner world in symbol or classical allegory as Claudel and Giraudoux. Little as all these types of drama may have in common, they all tend to do away with accepted moral standards of judgment, stage conventions and a traditional psychology based on causality; and in so doing they mirror the tremendous change in our scientific and philosophical outlooks: a change that can be summed up as a blasting of the neat logical system of Newtonian physics and all the religious, moral and political foundations of Western culture.

But as Martin Esslin has pointed out, this "anti-theater" of the Absurd "links up with an older tradition which has almost completely disappeared from Western culture: the tradition of allegory and the symbolical representation of abstract concepts" which he traces back to the "Italian Trionfo of the Renaissance to the English Masque, the elaborate allegorical constructions of the Spanish Auto Sacramental down to Goethe's allegorical processions and masques. . . ." Now what I wish to suggest is that the tradition has not been traced back far enough to its obvious beginnings in the medieval theater because of its apparently anti-religious message.

For what is the theater of the Absurd but an inverted kind of liturgical drama which opens a door long shut on mystery? What are the eggs and mushrooms that multiply on Ionesco's stage, the corpse whose legs extend out of the window and into the street and the rhinoceroses which snort in the wings but a deliberately provocative introduction of the miraculous? Here, as there, they are a flouting of the laws of causality in order to symbolize a metaphysical relation, whether it is to God or to the underlying absurdity of life. And what are the parables of Beckett and Genet and Pinter with their mysterious and de-individualized characters but a disguised reversion to the morality play? A play like Pinter's "The Lover" undermines our accepted bourgeois standards of faithfulness in marriage by showing a nameless and typical couple going through an erotic masquerade to get all of the "kicks" of infidelity without breaking the literal code. The couple are successively the husband, the wife, the harlot, the milkman and Lady Chatterley's lover: all abstract personifications that go through mock battles and pursuits to lay bare the universal pattern of marriage: boredom and hypocrisy. If the moral is "dis-edifying" rather than edifying, it is nonetheless a moral; and the characters are merely the battlefield in which impersonal forces contend. Even the horse-play and the humor are not so different from the medieval moralities as one might think—they included a good deal of the sort of dodging under the table Pinter puts into "The Lover"—nor are the characters "pale" though they are abstractions. Their quirks are typical of us all—those bongo drums!—and the essence of what they are is expressed in the most stylized way: in action.

There is nothing neo-medieval in this theater as there is in Hofmannstal's "Jedermann" which is also a morality, or T. S. Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" which is a mystery play. The all-important difference is that Beckett's characters are not waiting for God but for Godot, that the eerie stranger in Pinter's "Dumbwaiter" would lose his power if he acquired a name, and that

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the tramps in ashcans are not mystics but part of a mystique, which is the debunking of an "answer," or even of all answers. The existentialist stance in *non credo quia absurdum*. But the "absurd" is invoked and given substance. It is the contemplation and celebration of a long-lost dimension of mystery which the naturalistic theater had chosen to ignore. The "theater in the round" is strangely reminiscent of the cathedral square in that it gives a birds-eye view of man and his destiny. It is epic or paradoxical or absurd or any name you like, but it has burst out of that tacit agreement between theater people and audiences to limit their attention to the particular portion of life that was framed in those curtains —not to pose any "overwhelming question."

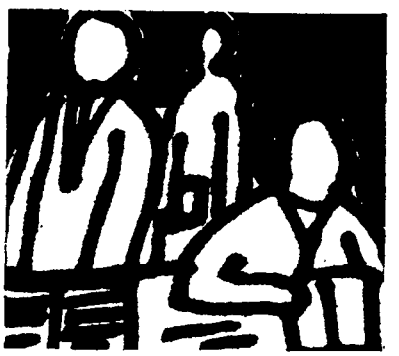
### *Mystification and Mystery*

This has been a one-sided violation of the agreement. Audiences are still largely disgruntled-mystified. But mystification is an essential component of the success of this theater. It has become a highly successful technique for keeping the audience in their seats while assaulting all they hold sacred. It is also a way of access to mystery —perhaps the only way open to reach a secularized public. And nowhere does the use of the technique come out better than in the recent Broadway production of "Tiny Alice."

Albee's intentions are baffling. The play is deliberately provocative, so skillfully constructed as to elude any attempt to give it a coherent "meaning." One can almost hear his slightly sardonic laugh—"pin me down if you can." And so the audience is kept swinging uncertainly between approval and disapproval. Is this a "Christian" or an "anti-Christian" parable? Is the conspiracy against brother Julian in which the Church (in the person of the cardinal) and the World (in the person of the lawyer) join with the Woman (Alice) and the still more mysterious Butler to rob Julian of his faith successful at the last? Do his betrayal and passion force him in the end to admit that there is nothing behind reality but "Alice," that malevolent satanic Presence which has engineered his betrayal and which he must now "go upstairs" to meet? Or does he persist, with a kind of existentialist nobility, in refusing Evil as the ultimate Fact, even though he must die for his refusal and be yielded up to its power? If so, doesn't this give him a kind of victory in defeat? In any case, Albee's "message" is surely that we must be stripped of illusions in the face of death and come to grips with the face of Evil, without escape in "religious" consolations. The Prince of this world is certainly Alice, whose sport is to watch us writhe as our illusions vanish. And hers is certainly the last word—save for a question mark. Any intimation of an "answer" would destroy the power of that final question: Who is out there?

The "meaning" of the play, then, is not on the literal level of the language and symbols, but in the experience of death as terrifying Mystery, toward which the whole play drives us from the start. Here is the technique of mystification used in its purest form. "Tiny Alice" is not the old lady in the armchair nor the seductive creature who is under the mask and the wig, nor perhaps even the terrifying Being who owns the castle and seems to be holding all the strings. Tiny Alice is always the ultimate Unknown.

The disguises act to imply there are other disguises, and the movement of the play is the stripping off of one disguise after another. The model of the castle within the Castle and the suggestion there may be more models within the model serve the same purpose of suggesting the Infinite—Pascal's infinitely small and infinitely great. All of this mystery is merely meant to prepare and enhance the final Mystery, when Julian is dying and that great obsessive sound of heartbeats comes closer and the Enormous Doors swing open on emptiness, and Julian stumbles



across the threshold. The play is in fact a "perfectly straightforward" *mystery* play, but one with a very new twist.

The new twist, of course, is that there is a negative rather than an affirmative frame of reference implied. Only the Woman Alice's prayer, "don't let it end yet," keeps the possibility of final Goodness ambiguously open. But the question that needs to be asked, I think, is whether this ambiguity which leans on the side of malevolence does not sustain a dramatic tension which is lacking in most religious plays. Is this frame of reference as anti-Christian as it seems to be, or does it not, in fact, focus a more dramatic light on the Passion? Could we experience Julian's agony the same way if we knew—and he knew—that God was waiting behind those doors? Hasn't Albee succeeded in reviving that terror of the Ultimate Reality which a familiar terminology, a familiar pattern generally banish? Julian cannot help but be a Christ-figure who is infinitely more dramatic in his abandonment to evil than the triumphant divinity we have often nailed in his place.

Hasn't the Passion in its traditional form really lost its sting, even in such plays as "The Cocktail Party" or "A Man for All Seasons" which attempt to relate it to a more



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modern context? Conventional theology has so emphasized Christ's divinity at the expense of His humanity that in the back of most minds lurks a basic disbelief that He was as disarmed as we would be in the face of evil. He "knew" the outcome, hence He could not really suffer in His faith as we must; and so we reduce the Crucifixion to its merely physical dimension of pain. If the essence of drama is to be torn apart in conflict, then its most perfect imagery is the dislocation of the cross. But pious iconography has so immunized us to the cross that it hardly touches any nerve. For audiences that the terrible cry of *"Eli eli lama sabachthani"* can no longer scandalize, there is brother Julian who does. What audiences seek, and Albee refuses to give them, is the reassurance of an ultimate context which will make the struggle merely a token one.

He has thereby battered open a new doorway out of the dilemma in which religious theater found itself for centuries. This is the dilemma which Ugo Betti defined in an essay called *Religion and the Theater*. "Rarely, after seeing a religious play . . . have I returned home and gone over it in my mind without experiencing a certain dissatisfaction. . . .

"This disappointment was due first of all, if I may say so, to reasons of pure dramatics. From the first scene it was altogether too obvious how the whole thing was going to end. No matter how cleverly or ingenuously the author had shuffled his cards, everything happened exactly as it had been arranged and also, unfortunately, as it had been foreseen. Battles were won and lost at the very outset—won, naturally, by the good cause and lost by the evil, won by the spiritual and lost by the material, won by faith and lost by disbelief. But, in a religious work, what other solution can conflicts of such a nature have? The posing of such conflicts is enough to give us their solution. . . ."

### *Retrieving Tragedy*

This is only another way of stating the old truism that tragedy is impossible in a Christian context, and one which "Tiny Alice" can hardly be said to invalidate since it specifically avoids the Christian context in order to retrieve the tragic dimension. We seem to arrive then at this strange conclusion that the only truly challenging religious drama which is possible today is that of the uncommitted or irreligious playwright. And this understanding of the problem is certainly what has given birth to "the theater of the Absurd." The doorway out to Mystery is only open to the Albees and the Becketts, and what is the poor "committed" playwright to do?

The dilemma, I believe, has two horns, and the question of how to get off of them keeps cropping up more and more urgently. One of the horns has been the idea that Christian art to be Christian must be "confessional" or at least didactic. Christian artists have at last struggled off that one. The old manicheanism which plagued the Church's attitude toward art for centuries has been swallowed up in today's incarnational theology. All Creation is seen as under the dominion of Christ, all of life is included in the sacred, and any celebration of reality is a value in itself, so that the Christian's, like any other artist's best field of endeavor, is whatever he is most able concretely to embrace. The "strategy," then, would be to get down to the roots of our secularism, to our inability to apprehend reality or to grow from experience, and to inject the most prosaic things with a hidden value. And this course, humble and realistic as it is, has a great deal to commend it.

### *Overtly Religious Drama*

But is this grass-roots strategy the *only* valid one for an artist who wishes to be faithful to his double vocation to art and to faith? Is the only way to be "all things to all men" to hide one's cards and concentrate on the details of the picture? Must any explicit use of religious themes and symbols, any overt posing of religious issues now be taboo? Many Catholic artists and critics today, in their wish to be catholic, bend over backward in this direction. It is a natural reaction after long intimidation at the hands of moral theologians, and pique at a continued charge of irrelevance from the secular world, to prove that the "natural" world is our province and we love it as well as anyone.

But then we are faced with this anomaly in the theater, that the "theological" issues are being exploited by the uncommitted artists and we, the most recent immigrants, are moving into the more cramped housing they have abandoned. There is a risk, at least, that we may stay clutching an aesthetic of realism precisely when that aesthetic is beginning to be outgrown.

If the new theater is in truth searching for a way of access to what I have loosely tried to describe as "mystery," if it is concerned with dramatizing the larger issues of man's destiny—and the choice of parables and abstract forms reflects this concern—then it is time we went back and grappled with the other horn of the dilemma. Is it possible to create a new kind of "mystery" that will be both authentically Christian and truly dramatic? Can we strip such a theater of its "edifying" content and recast the Christian mysteries in a radically new form?

The essential question here is that which was pinpointed by Ugo Betti: whether an affirmative context necessarily undermines dramatic tension. Somehow, Albee's way out of the impasse must indicate the way for committed playwrights too. The conventions and pose of the "absurdist" playwrights may well prove to be a dead end street, as many critics have predicted. But the search will continue to probe in a forward direction and the possibilities for a Christian playwright may well be



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more exciting than we have realized.

The ironclad definitions of a theological rationalism have been split wide open and mystery has come flooding back into our religious awareness and our vocabulary. Faith has been rediscovered as containing an indispensable element of darkness, as distinguished from intellectualized belief. With it there is a new dramatic tension implicit in an *existential* theology as opposed to a theology of *essence*. Our own apprehension of miracle and mystery need no longer be either naive or proselytizing, but sophisticated with a new awareness of history. We have nothing to "prove"—only to bear witness to the totality of what we have experienced. In the words of Charles du Bos we have only to "hold on in the darkness to what we have glimpsed in the light." There is an enormous zone of darkness, of Mystery to explore anew. The Christian paradox of victory in defeat can remain dramatic as long as defeat is not swallowed up in victory, as long as the humanity of Christ is not obscured by His divinity, as long as we respect the humanity of our characters integrally and never let them take shortcuts out of the jungle.

One can go farther in fact and say that faith creates its own tensions, that Christian tragedy not only is possible but takes on an added intensity from the fact that the stakes are so high. This art would be the most demanding: the tensions that converge on man from above and from below must both be upped if conflict is to remain entire. This is the kind of theater, I believe, that has long been struggling to emerge.

**BIRD-WATCHING**

# THE SCREEN

The hero, or anti-hero, of "Alfie" is a bird watcher—or bird seducer, birds with skirts, that is; and during the course of this movie that describes his shenanigans, Alfie often turns to the audience to give a short lecture on his technique with his victims—"birds" as he calls them, or sometimes this self-centered, self-assured Cockney fellow may just refer to the current girl as "it." Actually the girls really aren't victims, because most of them are only too willing to succumb to Alfie's obvious charms, to serve him and pamper him, even though they know he has no thought of marriage or a lasting relationship—some of the birds being already married.

As physically attractive as Michael Caine makes this lower middle-class Alfie, it's hard to believe that he could win these girls quite so easily as he flits from bird to bird. But the film, in spite of its talkiness, moves at such a rapid pace that it doesn't allow you to think too much about its unlikeliness. Alfie's cynical, cold-blooded philosophy is rather amusing as long as one doesn't take it seriously—and so are the situations, especially those with Millicent Martin as a two-timing wife; Shelley Winters as a mature, experienced babe who "knows what she wants and is going to get it"; Jane Asher as a naive young bird who spends most of her time scrubbing ("it can cook too") and then walks out on Alfie when he reads her diary.

But with two of the girls, the film takes a different turn. When Gilda (Julie Foster) discovers she's pregnant and insists on having the baby, Alfie, certain there'll be no strings and the baby will be given for adoption, okays the idea. Gilda doesn't give the baby away; and the shots of Alfie becoming attached to little Malcolm are fascinating. More important to Alfie, however, than any responsibility is his independence. So when Gilda's respected but unloved suitor proposes, Alfie advises the bird to marry him.

Alfie's next brush with real responsibility proves much more serious. He has no trouble seducing the lonely, unhappy wife of a TB patient. ("It will round off the tea nicely.") But later when she becomes pregnant, both Alfie and the woman (expertly played by Vivien Merchant) decide on an abortion. The scenes that follow, departing entirely from the frivolous mood of Alfie's breezy, come-what-may life, are chilly and thoughtful indeed. The abortionist, grimly and effectively played by Denholm Elliott, makes clear the crime involved here. Afterward even Alfie realizes what they have done. On seeing the embryo in the kitchen of his messy apartment, he bursts into tears. They are not for the baby, but for himself.

Alfie has cause to think twice before returning to his round of birds, twice, but not for long. Perhaps the film's finale, with shots of dogs out for a night's spree and Alfie still spouting his half-baked philosophy, is meant to sum up. Alfie admits his life has been fun, but "I ain't got me peace o' mind." Maybe the birds do win in the end.

As a movie, "Alfie" is frank, interesting, and extremely entertaining. Bill Naughton, who wrote the original stage play, wrote the film script, expanded the story some, and makes clear that Alfie may be fun to watch on screen but would be awful to know in real life. I found the play, which I saw with Terence Stamp in the lead role, tighter and more believable. Stamp was more convincingly Cockney. Michael Caine makes Alfie slicker, more handsome, but less real. Perhaps the lectures to the audience don't work as well in a movie as they do in the theater. The film does have the advantage, nevertheless, of good direction (Lewis Gilbert) and production, as well as a jazzy musical score by Sonny Rollins that adds much to the whole carefree theme. And "Alfie," like "The Knack" and "The Girl Getters" and "The Leather Boys," is another movie of our times. PHILIP T. HARTUNG



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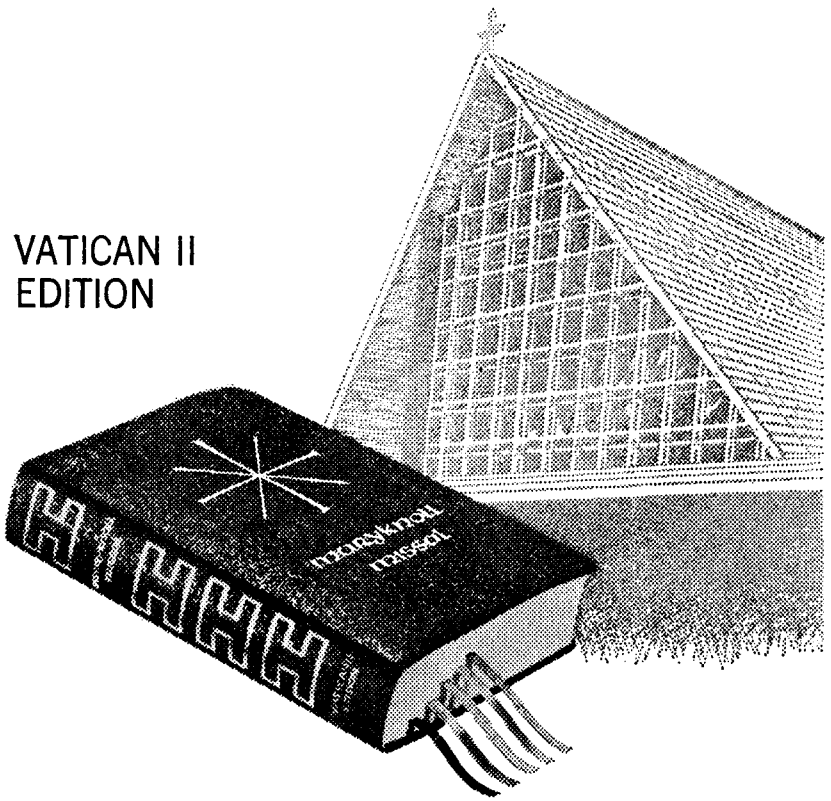


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# BOOKS

*The Inquisition as a modern business enterprise*

## *The Spanish Inquisition*

HENRY KAMEN

*New American Library, $5.95*

**THOMAS P. ANDERSON**

Perhaps every nation at some time in its history has some institution which seems to represent the very embodiment of inhumanity. France had its Great Terror, America its slavery, and even England its suppression of Ireland. But until our own time no institution in any land had gained such a long and evil reputation as the Spanish Inquisition. However, our age, in this as in so many other respects, has managed to outdo all its predecessors, and in comparison to the terrors of the twentieth century the Inquisition sinks to its true proportions. This makes it possible for us to assess more calmly the force which for some three hundred years dominated Spain, systematically uprooting all opposition and establishing a desert of orthodoxy.

Henry Kamen's rigorously objective book attempts to show the Inquisition, not as it was painted by its detractors nor as it was excused by well-meaning but misguided Catholics, but as it was in itself, and to fit it into the context of fifteenth-century Spanish society. This society was a jarringly modern one, filled with social and economic tensions and hatreds. Many Muslims and Jews had, for reasons of advancement, become nominal Catholics: the Jew in particular had infiltrated into the very heart of Christian society in the guise of the New Christian or *converso*, intermarrying with the nobility until it seemed as if every noble house in Spain might become "tainted" with the impure blood of this faith-subverting people. It was under these circumstances that Ferdinand and Isabella, in 1480, urged by the respectable Old Christians of Spain, brought into being an instrument for ferreting out heresy within the Catholic Church. As heresy was thought to reside chiefly among the *conversos* it was believed that this Inquisition would destroy the power of this fifth column and save Spain from becoming the prey to a conspiracy of secret Judaizers.

Thus, from the very first, the Inquisition, according to Mr. Kamen, was racialist as well as religious in inspiration. It was another step in the attempt of Spaniards to protect their *limpieza de sangre*—purity of blood—and as the Inquisition progressed so did the concept of *limpieza*. Even in the eighteenth century when the fires of the Inquisition were banked for lack of human fuel the concept of *limpieza* continued to function and to become more irrational with each passing year. Certificates of pure lineage were still required for every government position and for every public calling from cathedral canon to college professor. As Kamen explains, "genealogy became a social weapon," as certainly in Spain as in Nazi Germany.

The machinery of the Inquisition was peculiarly suited to the task of enforcing this purity. Like the police of modern dictatorships, the Inquisition operated in total secrecy. Any person arrested by it simply disappeared, and no one knew whether he was alive or dead until he appeared, often years later, at some *auto da fé* where his guilt was announced and his penance assigned, or where, more rarely, he was relaxed to the secular arm for burning. Thus an atmosphere of terror was created and the Inquisition thrived upon the legends of its own cruelty, legends which were, as this book admirably shows, grossly exaggerated by its enemies. Mr. Kamen is nothing if not fair to the Inquisition. He points out that its procedure was no more unjust than that of episcopal or secular courts of the time, but its tortures were infrequent and relatively mild, and that compared to the massacres of witches that took place elsewhere in Europe the executions of the Inquisition were fairly infrequent and tame. A few thousand at most were burned by the Inquisition, while perhaps a hundred thousand were murdered in the witch hunt madness of Germany alone.

But to look at it in this light is to miss the real horror of the Inquisition, a horror which cannot be assessed by mere statistical evidence of its victims. For the thing which is most remarkable about the Holy Office, and which binds it more closely to our own age than even its openly racist doctrines, is the fact that this was no outburst of hysteria like the campaign against witches, but a carefully worked out and systematically executed operation conducted by men who were neither religious fanatics nor monsters of sexual depravity, but were rather ordinary bureaucrats, unimaginative even in their tortures, who proceeded over the course of more than three centuries to try with unvarying patience to uproot every trace of every idea which they deemed inimical to their closed society. This ordinary quality reminds one of Hannah Arendt's theory of the "banality of evil."

The Holy Office was, as Mr. Kamen's book attests, one of the first modern business enterprises in that books were scrupulously kept on every phase of the operation, and that it was expected to pay its own way from confiscation and fines. In fact, so detailed are the inventories of property sequestered by the Inquisition to pay for the board of its prisoners that we are able to tally the contents of a sixteenth century Spanish abode down to the pots and pans and the old clothes. One notes that it was with this same methodical frugality that the workers in the extermination camps used to go about prying gold teeth from the mouths of their victims. And just as the modern totalitarian bureaucracy snuffs out the very remembrance of its opponents, so the Holy Office, through



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its own, independent index of forbidden books obliterated the names of condemned authors to the extent that even the great humanist Erasmus, who had once counted the Spaniards among his most receptive readers, was such an "unperson" that his name could not even be referred to in Spanish writings.

One might suppose that an institution which was capable of seizing any member of society on the slightest and most frivolous pretext, of keeping him incognito for years, of sequestering his property and leaving his family to starve while he was subjected to the rigors of interrogation, and, ultimately, of blasting the entire future of his line by declaring him and all his descendants to be of impure blood, would be terribly unpopular. However, Mr. Kamen convincingly shows that, while the Inquisition was an instrument of the crown and was sanctioned and supported by the Papacy, it was not imposed upon the Spanish people; rather it arose in response to their needs and desires and it remained throughout its long and curious history a popular institution.

Even a hostile writer, seeking at its close to bury it in infamy, was unable to come up with any evidence of hostility on the part of the average Spaniard. While it might, and sometimes did, visit Old as well as New Christians, it was looked upon for the most part as a worthwhile institution of racial and religious control, and the vast majority of the denunciations it received were made not by professional heretic hunters but by civic-minded citizens. In fact, it flourished for many of the same reasons as does an American organization whose tall peaked hats and long robes so curiously resemble the *sanbenitos* worn by the victims of the Inquisition.

Mr. Kamen remarks that most current Spanish literature represents the Inquisition as "an essential and saving component of the nation's structure." Thus, Franco's Spain perpetuates the attitudes of the Holy Office and it is interesting to note that Majorca, the scene of the longest and bitterest *converso* persecution, was similarly purged by Franco's "Crusaders." Georges Bernanos, in his *Les Grands Cimetières sous la Lune,* testifies convincingly on the similarity of the two persecutions.

But it would be wrong to imagine that the Inquisition represented a peculiarly Spanish phenomenon. It was the natural response of a closed society to forces that threatened it with disruption. And while the form the Inquisition took was peculiarly Spanish it represented forces which exist in what Ernst Nolte has referred to as the "inwardly antagonistic" societies of the modern fascist state as surely as they did in the Spain of the Inquisition.

## *The Problem of Boston*

MARTIN GREEN

*Norton, $6*

**THOMAS P. MC DONNELL**

Martin Green has a problem in the title of his latest book. To suggest to any contemporary Bostonian that the problem of his community is a literary one—and nineteenth century at that—seems at best a matter of benign uninterest and, at worst, a triumph of irrelevant pique. For what we have here, really, is a 234-page footnote to the history of American literature.

It would have been extraordinarily easy, though not necessarily facile, for Mr. Green to state his fact-as-personal-thesis in the form of a footnote, *per se*, though of course there should have been no book to put on the market at large. One ought casually to have agreed with Mr. Green's footnote, *per se*, that, yes, literary Boston in the nineteenth century was indeed a hothouse plant under the bell jar of its own debilitating milieu, so to speak, and so what else is new?

But when you stretch out a perfectly viable footnote to some several hundred pages of argument and exposition, then the chances for cordial agreements all along the way become distressingly nil. This book, consequently, is full of having it both and several ways at once: the emphasis shall be literary when Mr. Green wants it literary, and more broadly cultural when that suits the purpose at hand, and more specifically social at its weakest points, incidentally, but all rounded off on the author's terms alone. The annoying effect of this is that you keep running along by Mr. Green's side saying, "Yes, but. . . ."

Almost at the very beginning, for example, you are confronted with something like this: "Religious liberty had been secure since 1691," and that's more or less the end of it. Historically, of course, that was far from the end of it; and Mr. Green nowhere explores the fact that Massachusetts and (therefore) Boston were in fact adherents to a massively rigid state/church ethos, both legally and morally, until well into the nineteenth century; and the effects of this were no doubt incalculable on the creative tensions of its most gifted citizens.

Again, the best that Mr. Green has to say is that Boston was indeed peculiar—a self-privileged and self-congratulating inbred community—while the greatest figures at the peripheries (Emerson and Thoreau, of course) were already striking against the Establishment; and Emily Dickinson in Amherst was writing that kind of personal testament which Mr. Green could nowhere find in the writings of the Bostonians; and, later, the unmentioned Edward Bellamy in Chicopee Falls had written our first social-protest "novel" as entirely unnoticed by Mr. Green as Hawthorne is pre-emptively dismissed by him.

So it goes: running along at Mr. Green's heels, stammering all those "yes, buts" that he apparently shut his inner ear to before he sat down to write this elongated footnote called *The Problem of Boston*. Curiously, though, and very disturbingly as well, there *is* a problem of Boston very much like the one Mr. Green describes—though it is not literary now —if it ever was—and it hasn't even much to do with that marvelous sort of invective against Boston restaurants and nightlife which Elizabeth Hardwick put down in a 1959 essay, and which, to my knowledge, no Bostonian has dared to answer.

Still, the Boston mentality yet abides—or whatever else one may choose to call it—and it abides all but unaccountably in a similitude of that moral dilemma which Mr. Green more or less ignores in nineteenth century Boston and which we, in our fashion, more or less ignore again. It is not to see the whole of reality, what is



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actually around or near you, but only what you want to see. We shall never wholly discover the problem of Boston in some of the picture books about us, or in coy little volumes written by curators of obscure museums, but only in ourselves as we are—in the total complex of community.

So, please, Mr. Green, don't bother us with defunct literary problems of Boston. Or, if you have to, put it in the form of a footnote. *Per se.*

### *William Saroyan*

HOWARD R. FLOAN

*Twayne Publishers, $3.50*

**BERT C. BACH**

When Frank Norris commented "Who cares for fine style! . . . We don't want literature, we want life," he prefigured a strong tradition of dissent against the aesthetically selfconscious Jamesians who were later to gain applause from the New Critics' preoccupation with close textual study. William Saroyan's inflated reputation in the thirties and early forties preceded the firm entrenchment of the New Critics; its evanescence was a response to the same forces which deified James. An incredibly prolific writer who published over four hundred stories in the first seven years of his literary career, Saroyan is both a born solipsist and a devotee of unrehearsed spontaneity. He carries a vendetta against both academic critics and literary theorists and formalists. He has characteristically despised—and dispensed with—problems of revision, and more recently he has joined to his previous egomania for publication an admitted desire to earn as much money as possible.

Howard R. Floan's study, the first book-length evaluation of Saroyan, is eminently readable and informative. It again reinforces a lesson furnished by several volumes in the Twayne series: a first-rate book can be written on a third-rate subject. Delineating by genre the four stages of Saroyan's career (short fiction 1934-1939; drama 1939-1943; novels 1943-1953; and diverse pieces, including the addition of autobiography, 1953-present), Mr. Floan wisely devotes four of his six chapters to the first two. He postulates that the best short stories and the three or four best plays of the prewar era constitute the canon on which any claim for Saroyan's enduring reputation must rest.

Four aspects of Floan's study are particularly commendable; his analysis of Saroyan's pseudo-philosophy and romanticism as they responded to the emotional needs of his audience during the Great Depression; his discrimination (using the tools offered by Wayne Booth's *Rhetoric of Fiction*) of subtle distinctions separating Saroyan's implied authors and first-person narrators from the author himself; his delimitation of influences on Saroyan's writing—both aesthetic (Anderson, Hemingway, Whitman, Twain, movies, vaudeville, music, and critical traditions) and those inherent in Armenian culture; and his explication of "Saroyan's search for the right subject and for a technique suitable to it."

Most significantly, Floan demonstrates the fallacy of the presently calcified impression that Saroyan was thematically static during the period of his greatest appeal. Saroyan's initial theme, epitomized in the image of the flight to eternity by "the daring young man on the flying trapeze," is the intensified responsiveness to life made incumbent on man by the natural "inevitability of death." In his second volume of stories, *Inhale and Exhale*, thematic evolution embodies ethical implications. Men share a life in the presence of death; thus "to understand this common bond is to realize the absurdity of exploiting one's fellowmen and enslaving oneself in the pursuit of insubstantial


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distinctions of wealth and social position."

Like the Naturalists, Saroyan views life within a framework of imminent death, but he avoids their theme of endurance and tone of negation by affirming an "inviolability of the individual" which offers immunity from environmental and hereditary forces. *Love, Here is My Hat* refines the theme of brotherhood, shifting focus from man *en masse* to lovers in particular. Culmination of the thematic evolution appears in *My Name is Aram* and constitutes a major shift in Saroyan's romanticism. Here the alienated immigrants find in America "not an eldorado or a paradise but simply a place to live, good enough if they worked hard." No longer emphasizing the innate goodness of man, Saroyan accepts evil as a positive force. The world in which he lives, though not a utopia, is at most the best of all possible worlds and at least as good as it need be.

Mr. Floan has obviously faced a personal dilemma in evaluating the literary worth of his subject. One is reassured by the fact that his preface claims for Saroyan only "professional competence"; yet beneath his analyses appears the effort to bring us to conclusions we can accept but temporarily, only to have them shade into opinions we cannot accept at all. For example, much is made of the differences in influence constituted by the milieu of San Francisco and that of Fresno; yet little attention is given to the moves to Hollywood and the East, where much of the more incondite of Saroyan's work was mass-produced.

There is the intimation that an allegorical mode partially compensates for the lack of explicit and fresh impression. Moreover, when Floan says that Saroyan intended *Subway Circus* "less as a script than a series of proposals for theatrical development," he is recalcitrant to acknowledge that the vagueness which he has cited constitutes an artistic limitation: Saroyan's use of the device of suggestion, unlike that of Poe, flaws both his plays and short fiction. Always qualifying denigratory evaluation (save by silently omitting discussion of the most obvious trivia), the book sometimes emanates the tone of an apologia—a caution or preference obviously ill-advised when one takes cognizance of the virtually perpetual motion of Saroyan's typewriter.

Mr. Floan's study is well-organized, adequately documented and indexed. It is a welcome addition to the Twayne Series.

## *Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology*

THOMAS A. O'MEARA, O.P.

*Sheed and Ward, $7.50*

## *Mary: a History of Doctrine and Devotion*

HILDA GRAEF

*Sheed and Ward, $4*

**DONALD P. GRAY**

The process of reassessment now well under way within Catholic mariology seems likely to have the effect of further proliferating the already staggering quantity of Marian literature amassed over the centuries. As Father O'Meara clearly but by no means for the first time shows, mariology has become a focal point of many of the problems which vex the current attempts at ecumenical rapprochement. The theologies of revelation (notably the relationship between Scripture and tradition), grace, and the Church encounter some of their most telling objections when they are set in relation to the theology of Mary. Hence the Catholic theologian can hardly ignore mariology when he works in any of these areas.

What *Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology* seeks to do (and quite successfully accomplishes) is to place mariology squarely within the ecumenical problematic and in this way to integrate it with the central dogmatic tracts from which it has for so long been divorced. After setting out the Catholic position on Mary, which is later defended in a chapter on the development of doctrine, Father O'Meara takes up the Reformation reevaluation of Mary, the generally negative approach of contemporary Protestant exegesis and theology, and finally the more positive reconsideration discernible in certain ecumenically-minded Protestant movements. While prospects for some sort of agreement have dramatically improved in recent years, there can be little doubt that the over-all picture is still not particularly promising.

This volume does not so much break new ground as provide a survey of the *status quaestionis*, replete with copious documentation. O'Meara is guided throughout by the conviction that theology is a unified totality whose parts are mutually illuminating. This conviction also lies at the heart of contemporary mariological methodology, and Protestants have not been slow in recognizing that Marian doctrine and piety illustrate, as perhaps nothing else does, the Catholic understanding of Christianity. Karl Barth states the matter in his usual forthright if somewhat hyperbolic fashion: ". . . Marian dogma is neither more nor less than the critical, central dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, the dogma from the standpoint of which all their important positions are to be regarded and by which they stand or fall . . ."

What this conviction now means concretely for Catholic mariology is that Mary is no longer dealt with in an isolated tract whose sole purpose is to heap up privilege on top of privilege, but is seen within a context where she occupies a legitimate and important place. Viewed from this perspective, *Mary in Protestant and Catholic Theology* is not only a useful summing up of what has been done, but a further indication of the future of Marian studies.

Hilda Graef's little volume, which concludes her two-part historical study, investigates both the vagaries and positive developments of Marian theology and devotion from the time of the Reformation to the present. It is particularly good with respect to the Catholic side of the question, which necessarily receives the larger share of attention. Miss Graef shows herself throughout to be a meticulous scholar who has an impressive command of the primary sources and is thus able to make better critical use of the secondary material as well. While she is primarily concerned with allowing the sources to speak for themselves, the text is interspersed with incisive comments which leave no doubt in the reader's mind



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as to where she stands. The sections on the Marian apparitions are especially recommended as a solid and much needed venture in demythologizing.

It is really quite impossible to appreciate with sympathy the largely negative reaction of Protestants to Mary without knowing what they were and still are reacting against. In this regard, Miss Graef's study is not only enlightening but in places rather shocking. Aberrations of every kind, growing out of what one must indulgently assume was well-intentioned exaggeration, are all laid bare, as are the various attempts to apply a counteractive corrective. When read together with Fr. O'Meara's more properly theological treatment, which focuses on the current situation, Miss Graef's historical study makes one gratefully aware of how far we have come even if we still have a long way to go.

### *Theology of Revelation*

GABRIEL MORAN, F.S.C.

*Herder & Herder, $4.95*

**AVERY DULLES**

After centuries of neglect in Catholic circles, the theology of revelation is rapidly coming into its own. Hard on the heels of the Vatican II Constitution, several new and important studies have already appeared in English. Brother Moran provides a relatively brief treatment (about 170 pages plus introductions and appendices) which skillfully synthesizes many of the best insights of recent European theology. But beyond reaping what others have sowed, he develops a responsible position based on well-defined philosophical positions. Philosophically he stands close to Marcel and Mouroux; his tendencies are personalist, existential, and phenomenological. Consistently with this orientation he regards revelation as "a personal union in knowledge between God and a participating subject in the revelational history of a community."

On the basis of this personalist approach, Moran thinks it possible to get beyond various sterile disputes and dilemmas which have bedeviled the theology of revelation. For instance, it is frequently debated whether revelation consists primarily of words or of events in salvation history. According to Moran revelation in the most basic sense is neither. Only if we include in our notion of revelation the active receptivity by which personal communion is established can we integrate the revelatory events and the revealed truths in a manner which sacrifices neither to the other.

A second question, much debated in connection with the recent Council, concerns the "material sufficiency" of Scripture. Does the Bible contain the whole of revelation? If revelation is personal communion, Moran replies, it cannot be formally contained in written pages. There is no doubt a sense in which the whole Bible reflects the entire faith of the Church, but the same may be said of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.

A third question which has caused difficulty in recent discussion relates to the so-called "closing" of the deposit—

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a phrase which, incidentally, the Council Fathers decided not to write into the recent Constitution. Moran saves the main intention of his formula by pointing out that revelation reaches its unsurpassable fullness in the human consciousness of Christ. But he goes on to observe that only in His risen life did Christ achieve full consciousness of His mission and message—an important point which many have neglected. Since, moreover, the risen Christ remains in vital communion with His Church, there is a sense in which revelation still goes on. In fact, God continues to reveal Himself in new and unpredictable ways through the events of history and the interior leading of the Spirit. It is not easy to see how this can be reconciled with the immutability of the deposit. Moran's treatment of this problem is unusually good, but it raises issues which could not be adequately handled in a book of this size.

Moran's emphasis on the intersubjective and prepredicative aspects of revelation puts him in a good position to deal fruitfully with a fourth problem—that of revelation to the unevangelized. Going beyond the explicit teaching of the Vatican II Declaration on the Non-Christian Religions (which some have judged disappointingly cautious), Moran maintains that God through His eternal Word is truly in communion with all peoples. The non-biblical religions, even if they do not correctly thematize God's self-revelation in their doctrinal teaching, may nevertheless authentically mediate grace and salvation. Christianity may even learn from them how better to interpret and express certain aspects of its own message.

Thanks to his clear and convincing analysis of these and many other difficult points, Moran makes an important positive contribution. His study makes it undeniable that revelation is, above all else, an ineffable personal communion between God and His elect people—a communion which consists indeed in knowledge, but is not fully reducible to objective statements of a factual or doctrinal kind. If there is a weakness in the book, it is perhaps an excessive tendency to react against earlier presentations which have overemphasized these objective elements.

In his chapter on "Revelation and History" Moran shows admirably that biblical history, in order to be apprehended as revelatory, must be grasped as *our own* history. But occasionally he tends to speak as though the Christian were not committed by faith itself to the reality of determinate past events. While he surely would not wish to deny that happenings such as the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Jesus are of constitutive importance for the Christian faith, a fuller discussion of this point might have led him to modify his rather onesided insistence on the present and experiential features of revelation.

The chapter on "The Church's Understanding of Revelation" labors under similar difficulties. Moran seems ill at ease with the traditional notion of dogma as a truth to be accepted by all the faithful on the authority of God speaking through the Church. He looks on dogma instrumentally rather than objectively; he evaluates it in terms of its efficacy in mediating an intersubjective communion with God. When he refers to content, he emphasizes the negative factor, as though the sole purpose of dogmatic formulations were to protect mysteries from the prying eyes of rationalists. But the history of dogma seems to show that the positive element is significant and important. Nor do I see why a personalistic theory of revelation, such as Moran espouses, cannot make room for the idea of dogma as thematized truth. In his zeal to surmount the "subject-object dichotomy" Moran runs the risk of erecting false dichotomies between encounter and affirmation, between personal knowledge and doctrine, between the word of God and that of His Church.

These reservations, however, should not be interpreted as a negative judgment on Moran's book. It is to his credit that he has raised the issues sharply. Whatever one may think about the historical and doctrinal components in revelation, Moran has unquestionably put the accent where it should and must be placed in the light of Vatican II—namely on the salvific encounter which takes place here and now between the believer and the God who graciously calls men into His friendship. Working outward from this central insight Moran develops a broad and appealing synthesis in which the multiple aspects of revelation coalesce into an impressive unity. Thanks to his keen and disciplined mind, he writes with economy, accuracy, and literary polish. We may hope for many more works from the pen of this young and creative American theologian.

## *Mother Night*

KURT VONNEGUT, JR.

*Harper & Row, $4.95*

**WILLIAM JAMES SMITH**

The trouble with the Black Humorists is that they are not, as a rule, very humorous. They are, in fact, generally very depressing. But perhaps the same thing could be said of the average Broadway comedy. It is not necessarily the genre that is at fault but the execution. We have our classics of Black Humor which are very funny indeed. And if the young are said to admire them more than their elders it is because, as always, much of the cynicism goes over their pretty little heads. And even that is assuming—contrary to my observation—that the young read anything at all.

Kurt Vonnegut has risen, if that is the word, to Black Humor from an even more dubious genre, humorous science fiction, having put out a couple of volumes of it before he eased over into the main stream with his first "serious" novel, *Cat's Cradle*. This is a tale of the end of the world as brought about through human stupidity, a theme always good for a few chuckles in terms of Black Humor. This novel, as his subsequent ones, carries some of the stigmata of Mr. Vonnegut's pulp fiction origins—the one-line paragraph, and the feeling that, at three cents a word, no word ever got x-ed out and no joke was ever deemed too feeble or tasteless for inclusion.

Nevertheless Mr. Vonnegut came through with real promise on his second serious novel, *God Bless You Mr. Rose-*



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*water*. This is the story of an eccentric millionaire who is thwarted in his genuine efforts to do good by those old reliable devils, human stupidity again, and greed. But the book is good because Mr. Vonnegut occasionally forgets about being Black and concentrates on being Humorous to real effect. These passages are oddly tangential, even irrelevant, to the main story line. They deal with the denizens of a New England fishing village and it is not difficult to say why these bizarre folk are funny in their madness while Mr. Vonnegut's Mad Millionaire is not. It is simply that they are believable. Even Pisquontuit's thirteen-year-old Lila Buntline, the town's leading dealer in smut, is real compared to the ingenious but heavy tendentiousness of Mr. Rosewater.

It all goes back to one of the eternal verities of fiction—create believable characters and you don't have to do a single blessed other thing right. The characters don't have to be literal—they can be just as grotesque as Mr. Vonnegut's wonderful minor characters, and just as Black in their Humors. It all comes down to the fact that there is good Black Humor and bad Black Humor—a critical perception slow to make headway.

In his latest Mr. Vonnegut tackles what should be a dilly for a Black Humorist—an American Counter-Intelligence agent who worked for the Nazis during World War II as an anti-Semitic propagandist. Howard W. Campbell, Jr. his name is and he works happily and enthusiastically through the war years and is smuggled to safety in Greenwich Village when peace comes. Poor Howard is pursued, however, by guilts which he never quite accepts and he ends up in an Israeli prison awaiting execution with Adolph Eichmann. There ought to be lots of good belly-laughs in this one, of course, but somehow they don't emerge.

But if there is anything that the Black Humorists have taught us it is that the venture was not necessarily foredoomed by its implausibility. We can thank them for showing us once again (it has happened often before in literary history without the tag of Black Humor) that no material is ultimately resistant to the alchemy of humor. Our age is notably a time of exploration in this direction, and the Black Humorists are doing a valiant job for the most part. Those areas of life that become too sacred or too tabu to joke about become at the same time immune to serious consideration except in sentimental or hysterical terms. When the Black Humorists, for example, demolished the Institution of Motherhood they made it at least theoretically possible to return to the subject seriously. Mr. Vonnegut's attempts, too, to make us laugh, however bitterly, in areas presumed intractable to laughter may do something toward opening those areas out to a renewed consideration—a sort of shaking up in the kaleidoscope of laughter that enables us to see things in a new pattern.

Unfortunately, *Mother Night* does not completely succeed in its permutating bath of laughter. Only a few years


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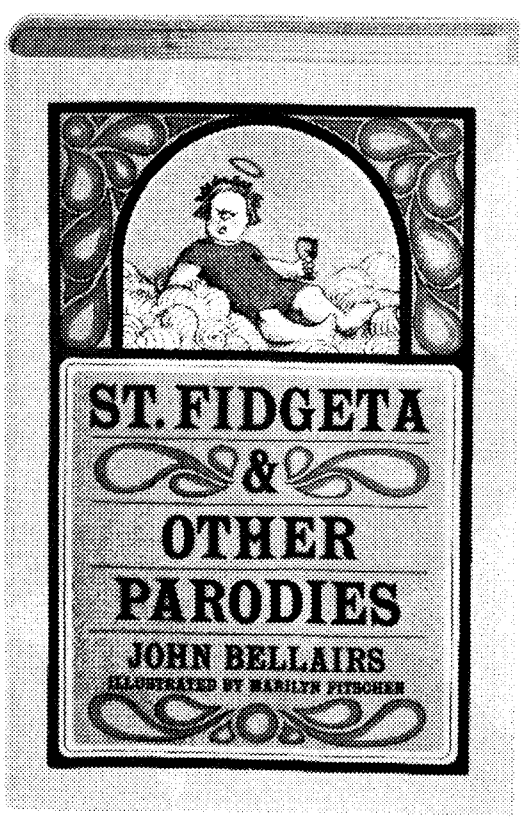


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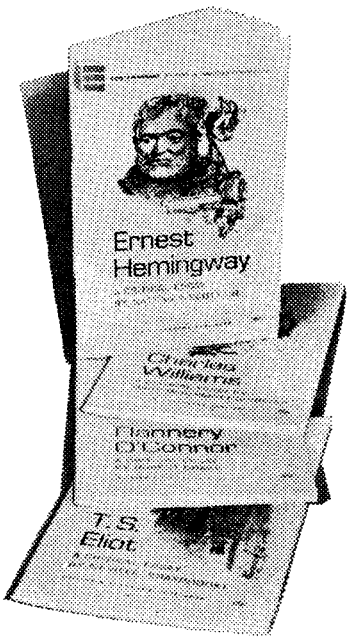


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ago we would have said that this was because his subject matter was unsuitable. Too many marvelous satiric feats, however, have been performed in recent years (not least by Mr. Vonnegut) for us to doubt that the trick can be done. It is the unsettling but healthy lesson the Black Humorists have taught us—that no disease is immune to laughter. And if the laughter frightens or angers us it only means that we must look once more at ourselves to see what is truly serious within us, and what is the mere facade of conviction without reason and without true belief. Perhaps this is another way of stating what Mr. Vonnegut says is the moral of his novel: We are what we pretend to be, so we must be careful what we pretend to be.

***The Tin Can***
WILLIAM JAY SMITH
*Delacorte, $4*

***Selected Poems***
GUNTER GRASS
*Harcourt, Brace, $3.95*

**ROSEMARY F. DEEN**

In William Jay Smith's new book, *The Tin Can*, the short poems, the translations from Voznesensky, even the light verse, are first rate. Most interesting are six poems written in a verse line so long it is almost a verse paragraph. This sounds loose; actually the verse is perfectly controlled and even elegant. The abundance in the length of the line is both a release and a perspective. For example, notice how these lines focus on mushrooms which are "risen from the dark duff of the woods, emerging at odd angles/ From spores hidden by curled and matted leaves, a fringe of rain on the grass around them."

The most successful of these poems are celebrations of a release both "buoyant and balanced." At its best the balance reminds us of Marianne Moore's "responsive and responsible," and it seems natural to find a poem specifically dedicated to her. In "An Observation" the song of an indigo bunting reminds the speaker of her: "I hear his chip-chip sweet-sweet chew-chew, followed by what sounds like a high *wit—/ Wit*—which, as you know, somehow cuts through the heart of haze. . . ."

Like Marianne Moore, Mr. Smith lets the object center and release the imagination. Mushrooms are a staple literary symbol for the ephemeral. The beautiful poem "Morels" is precisely about their "lightness": they have "sprung up overnight," they seem "rooted only on air," they are "the externalization of breath itself," and when carried, they weigh "absolutely nothing." But someone gathers them every year in the same place. A "you" quietly appears at the end of the poem, to whom he brings the morels, with whom he eats them. They taste of "the sweet damp woods and of the rain one inch above the meadow:/ It was like feasting on air." The simplicity and clearness of recognition, developing "layer on layer," constitutes the "high wit" of "Morels." The morels come to stand for what everyone has experienced and no one can directly define: the reality and persistence of the impalpable.

Günter Grass is an ironist. Two procedures are essential to his, as to most, ironic structures: an innocent point of view, and the detailed objectification of ideas. Ironic speech insists upon the innocence of its speaker in order to keep us uneasy about our own innocence. We too may be like the stove in "Music for Brass"—"a stove which says no/ and warms its own standpoint only." It is only natural that the speaker in "Sale," who sells even his "last and tiniest genitive," should be calm about the fact that "five or six streets from here they expropriated/ all the possessive pronouns/ and sawed off the private shadows/ of little innocuous men." Some speakers are innocently proud of their unnatural distinctions: "Where is my eleventh . . . my special finger." Some are proud of a virtuosity which is incompatible with nature: "the conductor seized his air gun/ and shot all the blackbirds." Above all, they are proud of bearing up in evil times—domesticating a plague of midges, for example: "Often we have guests in, to share the swarm./ But soon



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people leave again—/ having commended the cheese." Careful not to allow emotions about present evils, these speakers feel only nostalgia for good days gone: "Those days we slept in a trumpet./ It was very quiet in there,/ we never dreamed it would sound," or they hope for good days to come: "We live in the egg./ We have covered the inside wall/ of the shell with dirty drawings/ and the Christian names of our enemies./ We are being hatched."

As the quotations show, the innocence of the speakers is undercut by the perfectly sustained absurdity of detail. Unlike a conservative ironist such as Swift, who opposes reason to unreason, a revolutionary ironist opposes experience to abstraction. Grass's detailed objectification of detail is for the purpose of calling ideas to account: "I have always refused/ to let my shadow-casting body/ be hurt by a shadow-less idea." But this is far from denying that ideas hurt. *When* they hurt, they "are to me objective and answerable."

At the heart of revolution must be a conviction and a vision of Eden. The revolutionary conviction concerns what must change—what cannot be institutionalized or memorialized: "Once upended, garden seats/ stand vacant . . ./ occupied only . . ./ by the moon that never sits still." The revolutionary Eden is an Eden of experience and suggests something about the value of experience itself:

When love on stilts
picks its way along gravel paths
and reaches the treetops
I too in cherries would like
to experience cherries as cherries,

no longer with arms too short,
with ladders on which for ever
one rung, just one rung is missing,
to live on stewed fruit, on windfalls.

Sweet and sweet, darkening;
a red such as blackbirds dream—

Literature is full of love poems, but it would be hard to find one as "essential" as this poem about the immediacy of love.

## REVIEWERS

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## CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 569)*

foreign policy in South Africa by the subcommittee on Africa of the American Foreign Relations Committee of the House, under the direction of Congressman Barratt O'Hara, Democrat from Illinois, be given due publicity and that the matter be discussed on the floor of the House and the Senate. To my knowledge, the New York *Times* carried a


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Avery Dulles, S.J.

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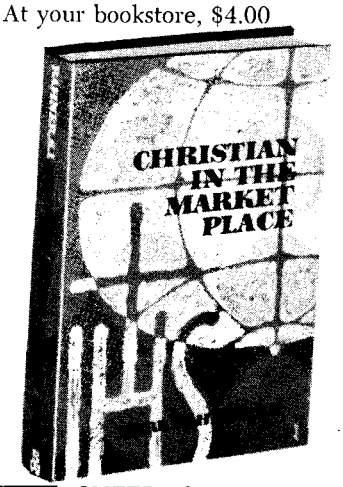


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single news item on the hearings when they opened this last March. Testimony has been pouring in for weeks and months, and we do not even have a notice in the newspaper about who has appeared let alone what they are saying.

LEONARD SWIDLER

### *Dunne In*

Wilkes-Barre, Pa.

*To the Editors*: We don't recall whether your editorial policies include any "pro-Jesuit clause," but I do think you should apologize to Father John S. Dunne, *C.S.C.*, after your making him a member of the Society of Jesus in your July 8th issue.

(REV.) RICHARD P. DESHARNAIS, C.S.C.

### *Reporting*

Zurich, Switzerland

*To the Editors*: The essay may well be "the curse of Catholic journalism" ("News & Views," June 17), but the "genuine reporting" apparently so ardently desired by the Catholic Press Association is the curse-like cross of some of us reporters who have for years been trying to supply the Catholic press with just such depth reportage.

While the Catholic press has finally caught up with an encyclical-like kind of living wage for some (but by far not all) staffers, a great many editors of Catholic publications and communications' media exercise a paternalistic and unrealistic attitude toward the very reporters who might supply them with the much-desired depth reportage. Good, unimpeachable reporting requires intense digging, indefatigable, boring research, traveling to the source, relentless interviewing—and time. With some wonderful exceptions, I have found few editors (usually quite generous to their inner staff) willing to show generosity where reporting assignments are concerned.

One editor for instance expected me to do a thorough reporting job on the Church in Germany (which would require a *minimum* of twenty interviews and travel to Berlin, Bonn, Munich, Freiburg, Hamburg and Essen) on $150, for all expenses. When I timidly asked for $200 (still inadequate) the assignment was canceled.

As for the fees, they are generally, thanks be to God, improving but it seems to me that not enough thinking has been done to establish procedures and structures that will enable reporters to enjoy the same fruits of the encyclical-level living wage and fringe benefits that at long last are being made available to the editorial staffers of some Catholic publications.

It is well and good to cry out for good reporting, but it seems to me that some hard and realistic thinking ought to be done also about the just and legitimate claims of proven, regular, tried and true correspondents out in the field. I for one find the going extremely rough and the editors who show even understanding, let alone do anything about the financial problems of reporting, are few indeed.

ADOLPH SCHALK

### *St. John's*

Jamaica, N.Y.

*To the Editors*: I wish to take strong exception to the unsigned editorial " 'Victory' For St. John's" that appeared in the June 24th issue of COMMONWEAL. In line with your request, I am limiting the length of my comments.

1. The anonymous editorial states, "The strike has failed, in that the teachers who were summarily dismissed last December were not rehired." No teacher was "summarily dismissed" last December; moreover, some teachers have been rehired.

2. The editorial speaks of *one* new graduate who "like many another, by accepting the status quo in order to assure his own advancement . . . threw his weight to the side he knew was in the wrong." The truth is that this *one* graduate cannot possibly speak for the 12,000 students at the University during the controversy. In fact, some students came to me personally with offers of assistance for the University.

3. The editorial states that one result has been "the loss of a large number of its best teachers." Who has judged them to be the "best teachers"? Their peers? Here is a peer comment by Gerald E.



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Fitzgerald, Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Political Science. "My own department will have an average personnel turnover no greater than that for the previous academic year. Measured in terms of professional education, experience, and caliber, our department staff for 1966-67 will be even better than the present."

4. The editorial mentions "the endangering of official accreditation." What is the source for this statement? The report of the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools contained no implication that St. John's accreditation was in danger. In fact, accreditation was specifically continued.

The Commission brought out the following points:

a. "Whatever opinion one may have of the action taken, it is clear that responsible governance has not broken down at St. John's University."

b. ". . . the Commission notes that the Board of Trustees of St. John's University has adopted new regulations as to academic freedom and tenure and as to faculty participation in the formulation of academic policy. These new regulations appear to be in the best tradition of American higher education, and if they were adopted in good faith and are administered in the spirit of academic freedom and integrity, they should go far toward creating a climate at the University in which *Lehrfreiheit* and *Lernfreiheit* can flourish."

5. The editorial states that "the virtually unanimous opposition of the national intellectual community will be translated into poorer and poorer students and poorer and poorer teachers." The truth is that, the roster of faculty, student body and, in particular, the freshman class, for the academic year 1966-67 is the best in the history of St. John's.

6. The editorial states that "at any step along the way, St. John's might have salvaged its reputation in the academic community by a slight show of flexibility." The University has always been willing to deal with teachers on an *individual* basis. Indeed, several professors were granted reviews of their cases with the result that some were offered contracts for 1966-67.

7. Dr. Meng categorically denied publicly that he called the Archbishop of Chicago, secretly or otherwise, and "asked that strike leader Father Peter O'Reilly, a diocesan priest from Chicago, be ordered to leave St. John's."

The use of the word "Victory" in your editorial is most inappropriately applied to an unhappy situation such as this. Yet, with the confidence and support of thousands of friends of the University, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and countless others, St. John's is emerging from this difficult period a stronger and better Catholic university.

BLAISE J. OPULENTE
Executive Vice President,
St. John's University

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